

J. R. Holden





George Cruikshank.

Portrait of Ann Dobbs.

LAND SHARKS

AND

SEA GULLS.

BY

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"TALES OF A TAR," &c.

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BOOK III.

THE MAN-OF-WAR

(CONTINUED).

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CHAPTER XI.

“ O’erspreading mists the extinguished sun-beams
drown,

And hang their deep hydropick bellies down.”

BLACKMORE.

IN conformity with instructions already received, Cornwallis had extended his line of look-out beyond the precincts usually prescribed to the Chief of the Channel fleet. No longer had he to confine his weary watch to the drear and abhorred localities of Ushant.

His fleet had to traverse a wider space, and to search the seas from Brest to Finisterre, and Finisterre to Brest.

By this increase of range, was increased the chance of intercepting the fugitive fleets on their homeward *route*; for, should Villeneuve out-pace his intrepid pursuer, or elude the vigilance of Calder, already despatched to stop him to the southward, the probability was, that in proceeding northward, to form (as was his supposed purpose) a junction with Ganteaume's formidable force, then ready for sea in the port of Brest, Cornwallis would be enabled to cut him off before the latter could be apprized of his approach, or proceed to his succour.

And now was vigilance put to its utmost stretch. No sooner did the "drowsy east" give indication of the dawn, and afford light sufficient to enable the eye to discern colours, than the mast-heads and other extremities of the Admiral's spars were streaming with bunting of every hue and form — flags,

pendants, cornets, and symbols of every shape, employed in the “numerical and compass codes,” were seen to wave in the wind.

In both columns, huge fabrics were to be discerned breaking, with the break of day, the close and compact “order of sailing” of the night—ships of the line shaping separate courses, and crowding canvas in different directions, as each proceeded to take up the desired distance assigned by compass signal. Here might be seen the taunt and symmetrical Mars, close-hauled, and crowded to the truck, leaving the fleet astern, and standing to the north, to occupy the prominent post of “look-out ahead.” There the long and low Plantagenet, setting to’ gallant studdin’ sails, spanking away with a flowing-sheet, and lasking to the N. E. to place herself on the lee-bow of the body of the fleet. Now the eye caught the majestic and swift-footed Foudroyant bowling before the breeze, and steering to the E. S. E. to take up the lee-quarter look-out. Then the wind-wooing Bellona, with yards

braced sharply up, and bowlines well boused out, hugging the breeze, to watch in its due direction at W. N. W. And now the *Courageux*, crank and yielding to the blast, stretching away to the S. W. to gain her appointed post on the weather-quarter of the column she had left.

By this system of sailing, and spreading look-out vessels, wide and far, a visual sweep encompassing a command of forty and sometimes fifty miles was obtained for the British Chief.

But the "spread-eagle search," as it was termed by the wags of the fleet, was now destined to be contracted. A fortnight's continuation of the clearest atmosphere of the brightest sky, of the bluest sea, of the finest breeze, and of the "smoothest water," that ever combined to give elasticity to life and limb, had been already succeeded by the densest fog that ever mystified the mind of man.

Contrast the former with the present position of the fleet. Imagine twelve thousand spirits,

all animated with one hope (that of intercepting the flying foe), all flushed with joyous anticipations of triumph, and then turn to the same number of depressed and saddened souls drooping under the conviction that the impenetrable veil which hid from view every object beyond the reach of touch, contributed to facilitate the enemy's escape.

Conceive, too, in this dense and dismal atmosphere, two-and-twenty huge vessels of war wandering the waters, each groping her weary way, and each, whilst under apprehension of parting or separating from the body of the fleet, in constant dread of coming in collision with another ship.

Talk of the dark mists and dense vapours which pervade the metropolis in the month of November—of city scribes inditing by light of lamp—of bankers' clerks cashing checks by glare of gas—of link boys, torch in hand, leading state carriages and stage coaches—of waggon taking the wall and walkers taking the ditch, and of the "light-fingered fraternity" lightening

travelling vehicles of their bag and baggage; these, these are trifles light as air compared with the casualties incidental to fog afloat.

The ships of the Channel were now on the noon of the fourth day still wandering in a wilderness of mist. Not, for a momentary lapse, did as much as the loom of hull, sail, or spar, break upon the sight: all were immersed in one interminable cloud, dense, and white as steam poured off from the valve of some gigantic engine. Sound alone was the medium by which the Channel chief sought to lead, or in any way conduct the movements of his blind-folded fleet. But, alas! in the general turmoil which assailed the ear,—such as metallic clatter on one tack, and rattle of sheepskin on the other, (for, with the exception of the Nonsuch, as will presently appear, each ship *affected* to indicate her supposed position in the “order of sailing,” by ring of bell, or beat of drum,)—the Admiral’s signal-guns were often unheard; whilst, perhaps, during a partial or momen-

tary cessation of clamour, stray sounds, proceeding from reverberating thumps of some heavy-handed cocoa-pounding gang in the galley of a neighbouring vessel, were officially reported as veritable "reports" of powder.

Turn we now to the Nonsuch, every part of which was penetrated by the remorseless fog.

Her lower and topmast shrouds were tau-tened to a barlike and equable tension, to attain which would have set defiance to the ordinary process of purchase. Saturated in every pore, and contracted in every cloth, her shrunk sails stood like boards, presenting little convexity of form, whilst from neglecting the approved practice of "settling," or slacking their respective halliards, the topsail yards were drooping their extremities, and "bowing" and arching from their centres, as if ready to snap and sever in their slings. The guns and shot, in the racks and combings, the water-ways, hammock-cloths, boats on the booms, (for, since Darcy's dip, the latter had

been kept uncovered,) and every article of 'furniture,' munition, or 'fitting' of the ship, which had originally wore a sable hue, had now assumed a bluish tint.

On the water-sodden deck, which, to render it less slippery to the foot, was slightly strewed with sand, lay coiled, and 'feaked,' and 'bighted' along, the blanched braces, and others of the running and dripping ropes. Whilst at the extremity of the weather-waist netting, stood the officer of the watch, muffled in thick attire, facing the feeding fog, and turning a deaf ear to the tiring and monotonous patter produced by the incessant drops falling from the canvas and cordage overhead.

In silent gloom, pacing the lee-side of the quarter-deck, were to be discerned young Darcy, and three other bare-footed striplings, (for the young gentlemen of the watch had doffed their shoes and stockings), edging up to windward, and encroaching on the weather-walk as each sought to dodge and avoid

the watery bequests of the set mizen stay-sail; whilst at the bowsprit end, at each cat-head, each quarter, and other positions assigned to the watch of the ear and eye, cowered in their several seats, seamen glistening with the silvery particles of vapour which clung to their woollen clothing.

Such was the aspect which the upper deck of the *Nonsuch* presented, when the first lieutenant, accompanied by the chaplain, approached the officer of the watch in the position already described.

“Well, Toms,” said Leatherlungs, despondingly, “any chance of a clear?”

“Not the least!” replied his messmate, with a shake of the head, which flung in the face of the parson, the water which lodged on the broad rim of his leathern hat.

“Holloa, Toms!” ejaculated Lawrence, “you seem to be very profuse of your fresh water.”

“To be sure; always share with a good fellow the good things that are going.”

“How is it,” asked Leatherlungs, “that our

bell has been so long silent? I heard it not once during the night."

"That question," returned the officer of the watch, "the skipper can best answer."

"Ah, I see," rejoined Leatherlungs sarcastically, "*some* of us have very sensitive ears."

"Whether sensitive ears or sensible brains has induced the suspension of the practice, it is not for me to determine; but this I must say," continued Lawrence, unusually serious, "and since the commencement of the fog I have turned a thought or two upon the subject, that the system of every ship ringing her bell, or beating her drum, at the will and pleasure of the officer of the watch, strikes me to be the sure way to defeat the desired end; for, recollect, Master Toms, that whilst knocking-up your own thunder, you only the more effectually shut out your neighbour's noise."

"Come, parson, that's very true. I never thought of that before," returned the officer of the watch.

“My dear Toms,” rejoined the chaplain pointedly, “were people sometimes to think a little for themselves, instead of perpetrating the practical blunders of official greybeards, stupidity would not so often usurp the place of thought.”

During this short colloquy, Leatherlungs remained mute, leaning his back against the hammock rails, with his eyes fixed upon his feet. At length he inquired,—

“When was the last bell heard?”

“Last night, and somewhere on the weather beam.”

“What, Toms, do you mean to say, that no other sound has been since heard?”

“None whatever.”

“None? Then take my word for it,” said Leatherlungs, waxing emphatic, “we have parted the fleet: it must be so.”

“Nothing more likely; and if so, the skipper’s alone to blame. He would heave-to in the middle watch. At four bells he sent for Johnny: desired him to haul the foresail up,

and to back the main-yard; saying that he was satisfied in his own mind, that the admiral must have made the signal for the fleet to lie by."

"And how long were we hove-to?" asked Leatherlungs.

"Two hours."

"Two hours! *two* hours hove-to, upon the mere strength of idle imagination! It's too bad!" ejaculated the first lieutenant, stamping his foot upon the wet deck. "The next thing we shall hear of is, that the admiral has tumbled across Villeneuve, defeated him, returned to Plymouth or Portsmouth with flying colours, each ship towing a prize into port; and that, by return of post, the first lieutenant of every ship in the fleet had received his commander's commission. By the Immaculate Man, it's enough to set a man stark staring mad, to think that a poor devil, after fagging for years and years, is to lose his only chance of promotion by the d—d, perverse——"

"How's her head, quarter-master?"

inquired Sir Montague, stepping from his cabin.

“Wes-nor-wes, sir,” answered Weatherly, who was then just in the act of “touching up” the drowsy compass with a wooden wand, which the old mariner had that morning manufactured from the “expended” ramrod of a ship’s musket.

“And where’s the officer of the watch?” inquired the captain.

Stepping from his nook, at the end of the weather-waist netting, which concealed him from the captain’s view, the officer of the watch now answered for himself.

“Have you heard aly bells, Mr. Toms?”

“None, sir.”

“Nor drums?”

“Nothing of the sort, sir.”

“It’s very odd, very odd ildeed.”

“Mr. Leatherlungs thinks with me, sir; and we have just been discussing the subject, that we are further from the fleet than we may imagine.”

“Mr. Leatherluls,” called Sir Montague, motioning the first lieutenant to approach.

Leatherlungs proceeded aft, with sullen step.

“What do you *think*, Mr. Leatherluls?”

“I know not *what* to think, sir.”

“Thel, if you dolt, *I* do; for I’m satisfied il my owl mild, that some of the these geltlemel,” pointing to Toms, “have, in some of their watches, lost the admiral’s guls.”

And without awaiting any response, save that which might have been gathered from the significant glances interchanged between the two lieutenants, Sir Montague directing the officer of the watch to set the courses jib and driver, retired to his cabin.

The sails were speedily set, and soon gave evidence of the peculiarly contracting power of fog. The foresail looked like a reefed sail, and the mainsail, as Leatherlungs observed, appeared as if it belonged to a smaller vessel.

The bowlins boused up, and the weather

braces set taut, the two lieutenants returned to their stand on the gangway.

“ I say, Leatherlungs,” said Toms, jocularly, “ who now looks most like a lost gull? ’Tis plain he perceives his error, and is now anxious to pull up for lost ground.”

“ Lost ground, indeed !” murmured the first lieutenant.

CHAPTER XII.

“ I’ll startle you worse than the sacring bell.”

HENRY VIII.

AFTER having wrapt his person in a drab-coloured water-proof surtout, buttoned up to the throat, and encased his thick neck in several folds of a large white worsted ‘comforter,’ the baronet reappeared upon deck.

Already had he taken his stand on the combings of the covered hatchway, before which stood, in the customary place in most ships, the ‘bearing binnacle’ on the quarter-deck.

In this position, with arms folded, and head bent downward, the senator remained for some minutes in a mood evidently intended to pass for one of deep meditation, when, at length, like a man suddenly making up his mind to act upon some happy inspiration, he called, in a loud and authoritative tone—

“Mr. Toms, ril’ the bell, and keep it goil’, as lol’ as the courses are set.”

“Messenger,” cried the officer of the watch, “for’ard and ring the bill.”

The under-sized urchin, who answered to the call and calling of Messenger, was not long in reaching the belfry in the waist. In a few seconds, he sent forth a ding-dong—ding-dong—ding-dong, which pierced the tympanum of every ear in the ship.

“What d’ye think of that?” asked the first lieutenant of the parson, who had already “turned up his hands” to protect his ears. “Now, when the steed’s stolen, we shut the stable door.”

“*Capriccio, Signor,*” was the brief reply.

“Mister Toms! Mister Toms!” cried the baronet, straining his lungs, to make himself audible to the officer of the watch, “good heavels, sir, do, *do* learl to keep your ears opel. No wolder the admiral’s guls are lost. Heave the log, and see what the ship goes.”

The log was hove by the mate of the watch, and “six and two” was the ship’s reported speed.

“Six al two, eh! Six al two!” iterated the senator, entangled in his own thoughts, as the officer of the watch stood by his side, waiting his commands. “Now,” (and “now” had a pause). “Oh! yes. Now, Mr. Toms, you may pipe the people dowl to diller agail.”

And then turning suddenly to the “orderly,” pacing his post at the cabin-door, he exclaimed, “Seltry! seltry! tell my servalt to bril’ me my scelted sluff.”

The sentry, though an old soldier, was not altogether “up to snuff.” He was a new hand in the ship, and had not long, with others, been despatched from the Plymouth division to

complete the complements of the different "parties" serving in the fleet. Sir Montague had, therefore, to repeat his commands.

Advancing a few paces, halting in front of his superior, and standing stiff as a ramrod, his arms straightened down his side, and his hands clinging to his thighs, as close as if the limbs had been glued together, the soldier, who laboured under an impediment of speech, stammered forth,

"Plea—plea—plea—ple-ase, sir, what d—d—d—did you plea—plea—ple-ase to say, sir?"

"My scelted sluff, sir! Are you deaf?"

"N—n—no-o, sir."

"Thel, what the devil do you stald there for, stammeril', like a stuck pig?"

"D—d—did n't un—der—der—der—stand ye, sir."

"Mr. Toms, seld for the sergealt of mariles, and desire him to relieve this mal, as sool as the people have diled. Pretty pass, ildeed, to place a fellow at *my* door, who cal leither com-

preheld his owl lalguage, or deliver iltelligibly a silgle word. Quarter-master, dowl off the gul, and tell my servalt to seld me up some fresh sluff out of the callister in the starboard quarter-gallery."

Dismounting the gun, on which he stood conning the ship, Weatherly proceeded on his mission, muttering, as he reached the half deck—

"Damme, there's a pair on'em; and yet, too, bad as the soger is, give'im his time, and he *will* come at som'at like the sound o' sense. But as for the tother, never—never in all my born days, did ever *I* hear mortal man make such a precious mess o' his mother's tongue."

Hardly had Weatherly delivered his message, and returned on deck, ere an indistinct hail, proceeding from the look-out man at the bowsprit end, attracted the attention of the gangway group.

"What does he say? Curse that deaf'ning bell! there's no hearing a word," petulantly exclaimed the officer of the watch.

But inquiry was not to be forwarded by oburgation. Toms might as well have whistled to the wind as remain stationary denouncing the clamour of the bell. This Leatherlungs soon saw.

Forward he flew with the rapidity of thought, when throwing his eagle-eye over the breast-hammocks on the lee-side of the forecastle, a towering mass bursting through the fog broke upon his sight.

“Down wi’ the helm. *Down* wi’ th’ helm. ’Bout ship—’bout ship, Toms,” thundered forth the first lieutenant, drowning the shriller sounds of the bell with his deep stentorian tones.

“Hands about ship!” echoed the officer of the watch, pointing his trumpet downward in the waist.

“Lo, sir, lo,—up wi’ the helm—*up* wi’ the helm,” roared the baronet, in a peremptory tone. “Do l’t you *lo*, Mr. Toms, that *we* are on the larboard * tack?”

* Larboard tack, according to the old sea *saw*.

“Is she goil off?”* inquired the captain.

“The driver, sir,” said Weatherly, “flogs her up abaft.”

“Ease off the boom sheet,” sung out the officer of the watch.

“The mizen-topsail,” hinted the quartermaster, eyeing the sail overhead.

Sir Montague took the seaman’s hint. “Youlg geltelmel,” he cried, “shiver the mizel taupsle—quick!”

The captain’s mandate soon caused the sail to sympathise with the young gentlemen.

Obedying her helm, and increasing her velocity at a rapid rate, the ship had already receded from the wind, when, before sufficient time was afforded to those on the quarter-deck to catch even a momentary glance of the large looming object, which had so startled the first lieutenant on the forecastle, a sudden crash, proceeding from the snapping of the outer

Ships when standing on the larboard tack are compelled to bear up or give way to those standing or crossing on the starboard tack.

* Receding from the wind.

spars on the bowsprit, assailing the ears of those abaft, was instantaneously followed by a collision terrific in effect.

Staggering under the severity of the shock, and giving two or three short, quick, unnatural rolls, first to starboard and then to port, the stricken ship, again yielding to the pressure of her canvas, vibrated for several seconds as if every plank, beam, rider, timber, and floor-futtock pertaining to her frame had felt the concussion in its fullest force.

The bulky bowsprit, large in the girth as the forest oak, having broken short off in the night-heads, had already fallen, together with the sprit-sail yard, jib-boom, fore-top gallant mast, head of the fore-top mast, and all the heavy-hanging accompanying gear of shrouds, bobstays, guys, martingales, and multitudinous running ropes under the lee-bow of the ship—presenting to the eye a lumbering mass of confused wreck.

The boats on the booms, despite of their several lashings and confining gear, leaped

from their cleats and chocks, and shifted their positions on the skids ; whilst the massive and heavy lower masts, starting in their steps, suddenly snapped several of the shrunk and water-tautened shrouds of the standing rigging. The main-top gallant mast, following the fate of the spars forward, hung over the side, suspended by its own rigging, and every now and again was seen with the lee-roll to dip lightly into the water alongside, as if acting, as Mr. Fuller poetically observed, "the part of weeping willow to the general wreck."

Every individual, standing or sitting in the ship, was thrown from his legs or displaced from his seat. The officer of the watch, trumpet in hand, was precipitated from the gangway into the waist, breaking his fall by breaking the back of the baronet's favourite goat ; whilst Sir Montague, falling forward from his stand on the combings of the hatchway, was pitched with his head right into the binnacle box.

To the ship's company, who were discussing in their berths below their cherished "three-

water tipple," and who to a man had participated in the first lieutenant's conviction that the ship had parted from the fleet, the concussion, indeed, was most unexpected. Recovering from the shock, the people on the lower-deck made a simultaneous rush to reach the ladders. Those which crossed in the hatchways became choked, and the eagerness of all to ascend proved only the means of detaining them the longer below. The more light and nimble lads caught hold of the combings of the hatchways, and swinging themselves up by their arms, fell sprawling in the wet waist.

The ward-room idlers, who, with the exception of the chaplain, had not "shewn" once on deck since the setting-in of the fog, were now seen, in wild dismay, crouching aft under the poop. The plethoric Gorge, in his hurried exertion to get upon deck, threw the blood into his head, which fortunately finding a "safety-valve" in his nasal organ, prevented the probability of the "captain of the *corpse*"

becoming in reality the *corpse* of the captain. Dunanney looked the picture of despair; whilst the trembling and pallid purser sought in vain to procure from the stammering marine the slightest information touching the disaster.

“Heave all aback!” cried the captain, as soon as he had been replaced upon his legs by the joint efforts of Weatherly and the mate of the watch.

“Impossible, sir, impossible!” exclaimed the first lieutenant: “if we do so, we shall lose the foremast. The bowsprit’s *gone*, sir!”

“The bowsprit gol! Bless my soul! Is the figure-head hurt?”

The response made to this untimely interrogation is not to be recorded.

“Mr. Leatherluls, shortel sail—lower the topsails—do *do somethil*’, for heavel’s sake.”

“Man the fore and main clue-garnets-fore-taupsle clewlin’s,” vociferated the first lieutenant, in accents which clearly indicated a sense of self-superiority in moments of

emergency. "And folksel there, haul the foresail up, and clue the fore taupsle down as fast as possible;" adding, in the same breath,—“Let go the main tack and bowline—up main sail. Mr. Darcy!”

“Sir!”

“For’ard, and tell Mr. Giles, the moment the foresail’s up, to bouse well taut both the fore tacks. And tell the boson to despatch a party instantly for the fore-runners.—Fly! Main-top there!—overhaul the main-to’ gallant mast-rope down on deck directly.

“Away with the main clue-garnets, men;—up with ’em cheerly,” continued Leatherlungs. “Bravo! Parson. Look, men, look! Look at Mr. Lawrence, shewing ye the way to work with a will. Haul up *that* lee fore-clue-garnet. What are they about wi’ the fore taupsle clewlin’s?—*Do*, Mr. Fuller, brail up that infernal, flapping driver. Wish some o’ you gentlemen under the awning there, ’ould clap-on, and lend a hand here, ’stead of standing shivering and shaking there in the way o’ the work. You, sentry! keep

your post clear, sir." Then hailing the fore-castle, "Mister Giles!—good Heaven, sir, haul taut the fore tacks. D'ye want to *lose* the foremast? Where's Mr. Toms?"

"He 's hurt, sir."

"Master — Master — *do* go for'ard, an' get the fore-runners up; meantime steady for'ard the mast wi' the fore-tacks; and try, if you can, and save the fore-taupsle. Where's the gunner?"

The gunner was close at hand, in the act of clearing the weather main sheet, which had got under the fore part of the main channels.

"Mr. Gordon,—none o' the lower-deck ports up, I hope?"

"Only two on the slope, sir, in the gun-room.

"*Slope*, sir! see them lowered directly—
instantly barred in."

"Mister Maul?"

"Here am *I*, sir."

"Sound the well; and send your crew immediately on the folksel."

The cry of "Sound the well!" sounded any thing but well in the purser's ear.

"Gracious Heaven! Dunanney, do you hear that?"

"It's very awfu' indeed," returned the shivering quack.

The rapidity with which mandate, remark, caution, and reproof were alternated in the first lieutenant's mode of speech, may possibly impress the reader with no very incorrect conception of the chaotic state of his Majesty's ship. To use the *seldom-employed phrase* of writers of romance, "the scene was one which indeed baffled description."

The ill-timed interrogations,—the ludicrous cacophany,—the contradictory orders,—and the half-frantic confusion of the legislative framer of the Borough Bills,—together with the dictatorial commands and stunning shouts of the would-be captain—the hoarse bawlings of the slow boatswain—the shrill and confounding cries of "young gentlemen" startled into walking speaking-trumpets, by

the coarse threats and rude gesticulations of higher authorities—the bustling flights of young Darcy and other nimble-footed lads running to and fro, to further orders already given—the boisterous interpositions of *busy* mates, “breaking-off” working hands, and dragging away willing men from this rope to clap them upon that—the heavy tramp of the “double-banked” gangs in the waist and quarter-deck, as each sought to “stamp-and-go,” and “walk-away” with the water-swollen ropes, which were to compress and confine into folds the heavy canvas of the huge courses—and the thunder-like claps of the wet sails, wildly flapping in the wind,—may furnish a faint notion of the “*Nitty*,” as Weatherly phrased it, which the Member for B—— “had brought upon the barkey.”

Meanwhile the towering fabric with which the Nonsuch had come in collision, (for the lofty hull, the short lower masts, and triple tier of ports, gave evidence of a three-decker,) had already grappled the “Little Liner,”—

clinging to her with tiger-like tenacity, as if determined to visit with signal severity the presumptuous act of striking a power so eminently superior to itself. In short, the stranger had instantly on receiving and gliding from the staggering blow which struck her in a lateral direction on the lee-bow, hooked with the outer arm of her sheet anchor, the after-shrouds of the *Nonsuch's* weather main-rigging. Entangled thus, the two vessels relatively assumed a head-and-stern position, and were now seen rising and falling with the long undulating swell peculiar to the Bay of Biscay, —grinding their bends together, and smashing their scupper-shoots, whilst every lee-roll of the larger vessel threatened to tear and carry away at one fell swoop the projecting channels of the smaller ship.

Nor was the excitement in both vessels likely to be allayed by the angry recrimination of their respective chiefs.

“What ship is that?” hailed the greater authority, in a pompous and peremptory tone.

“What ship is *that*?” echoed the senator, pitching the imperative a key higher, as he now stood upon the poop of the lower vessel.

“I *desire*, sir, that you instantly *re-ple* to my question,” rejoined the first interrogator, throwing into his accented syllables the full force of the thirty-five Articles of War.

“This, thel, sir, is the *Lolsuch*, commalded by Sir Moltague Mute.”

“Then, Sir Montague Mute ought to be ashamed of himself,” remonstrated the stranger, “for carrying such a press of sail in *such* a fog.”

“Sir, I ’m lot ashamed of myself,” rebutted the baronet,—“but I ’m ashamed of aly captail that cal tell alother captail he ought to be ashamed of himself.—Ald low, sir, that I ’ve givel you the lame of *my* ship, I, il returl, have to request the lame of yours.”

“This is His *Majesty’s* ship Royal Sovereign, Captain Sharp.”

“Sharp words!” said Weatherly, nudging the elbow of the man at the weather-wheel;

adding, in an under-tone, “ never seed it otherways—marchan’ sarvus, or King’s sarvus, both alike. Yer skippers tarn to a-badgerin’ one another, ’stead of first lending a fist to clear their craft, and save their sticks.”

At this juncture was seen, peering over the lee quarter-deck hammock netting, the broad herculean bust of a man dripping with wet. From the stiff and crawling action of his limbs, in climbing over the stowed hammocks, and effecting a footing in-board, it was evident that the man was suffering from some bodily hurt.

“ My precious eyes !” ejaculated Weatherly, perceiving the man’s dripping plight, as he lowered himself leasurely into the lee waterways—“ my eyes, if it is n’t Pleasant Paul. —Why the growlin’ beggar ’s been over-board !”

Potter’s condition had already caught Sir Montague’s eye.

“ Where,” said he, “ has that mal come from ?”

“ From the bowsprit cap, sir.”

“Are you hurt?”

“Got a precious nip in the lines, sir,” rejoined the sufferer; adding, in a surly tone, as he brought his dexter hand to bear in a neighbouring region, “sartain too, I ’ve started my starn-post.”

“Take that mal dowl to the doctor.”

“I hear ye, Sir Montagoo,” said Dunannee, stepping from beneath the poop-awning, and catching overhead his patron’s eye; for the sycophancy of the quack had not forsaken him, even in his fears. “I hear ye, Sir Montagoo. In succouring the *sack*, you even anticipate *me*.”

Potter was led down the after-ladder, and conducted forward to the sick berth, by a couple of the afterguard, Dunannee preceding, at a slow pace, his limping patient along the lee side of the main-deck.

“Why, Paul, you must have kept a precious bad look-out at the bowsprit-end,” observed the cripple’s principal supporter, “to have brought us into this ’ere thundering mess.”

“ Who are *you*, as dares to talk of a bad look-out? Let go your hold, ye skilagalee-licken beggar?—let go yer hold,” exclaimed Paul, heaving his principal prop headlong into the lee-scuppers.

“ Holloa ! What’s all that scooffling about ? ” inquired the doctor, turning round, little prepared for the irrelevant reply.

“ *I ’m* not a-goin’, doctor,” said the growler, “ to take never no more o’ your doses to-day. I ’ve swallowed enough already.”

“ *My* doses ! ” said Dunanney ; “ why, sir, you ’re not on my list.”

“ No, by Joe,—but I ’ve swallowed as much salt water, as if I was.”

“ Hold your tongue, you mutinous scoondrell ! ”

“ True bill, tho’. Why, look at me. Is n’t it easy to see, as I ’ve only just comed out o’ yer *med’cine* chest.”

In order to comprehend the *plaisanterie* of Pleasant Paul, it may be necessary to state,

that Dunanney's remedial dose for all complaints was "a pint of pure salt water."

Pleasant's point spared him the unpalatable "pint." The cripple was consigned to the care of Smith.

Meanwhile "slashing work," as young Darcy had termed it, was to be seen upon deck.

"Cut away those lower laniards," cried the master of the Sovereign, addressing a brawny broad-shouldered boatswain's mate, who was seen without the port, striding the muzzle of a main-deck gun, hewing and hacking, with a large sheet-anchor axe, every particle of hemp or wood which tended to retard the extrication of the two ships.

"Lo, sir, lo; I'll lot have *my* riggil cut away," interposed the Baronet, authoritatively.

His Majesty's rigging had been pretty well hewed already. Nor was Jack's axe inclined to *ax* the senator's permission, as to what it should or should not sever.

At length by cutting the desired shroud, the

two ships were separated ; and, in a few seconds were lost to each other's view.

“ Turn the hands up, clear wreck ! ” vociferated the first lieutenant.

And with this mandate, and pleasing occupation before them, we leave Messrs. Leatherlungs, Muddle, Browne, and Maul to secure the tottering spars, and to form a “ jury ” for the lost bowsprit of his Majesty's ship.

CHAPTER XIII.

“ Now my sands are almost run ;
More a little, and then done.
This, as my last boon, give me,
(For such kindness must relieve me).”

SHAKSPEARE.

THE jury bowsprit had been hardly rigged, and the other spars of the ship rendered sufficiently secure to carry into effect Sir Montague's decision of bearing up, and proceeding direct for Plymouth, ere the wind, veering gradually round, eventually settled right in the teeth of the “ Little Liner.”

Nothing is so trying to the temper, or so likely to produce sullenness, ill-will, or depres-

sion of spirits in sea-faring folk, as a contrary wind. Approving smiles and cheering words constantly accompany a "flowing sheet," whilst lowering looks and asperity of tone are too frequently the only attendants of a baffling or "beating" breeze.

If, then, the annoying influence of a "hard-hearted wind," (as Mr. Muddle daily denounced the "North-Easter" with which the ship had to contend,) be felt by those in health, how much more distressing must it be to those suffering from bodily pain and languishing in the sick-bay? The irritability of invalid-nerves then becomes exacerbated, and sickness at sea (not sea-sickness,) sometimes partakes of hypochondriasm.

From a sharp attack of rheumatic fever, consequent upon his recent "dip," Pleasant Paul had become any thing but a pleasant patient. Since the collision which took both the bowsprit and Potter overboard, Paul had been ten days bed-ridden in the sick-bay. His malady had somewhat reduced his hercu-

lean frame. His spirits were much depressed; and his peevish complaints and natural irritability of temper, had for several days rendered him an object of annoyance to all his mess-mates; while, to the under grades of the medical department, he had already become a positive plague.

That he had occasional paroxysms of pain, none denied,—not even Dunanne; but neither Smith, nor Smith's assistant, Mr. "Billy Bolus," as the loblolly boy was designated by the foremast-men, were under the slightest apprehension touching the recovery of their querulous patient.

Not so, Paul; he felt convinced his time was come. He knewed that he was a *gone* man:—doomed for a sartainty to be D. D.'d* on the books of the barkey. Moreover, he had seed enough in the middle watch of the past night

* These letters are affixed to the man on the ship's books when he dies on-board. They signify "Discharged dead."

to determine him to summon his tiemate to his hammock's side.

Paul's tiemate happened to be the galley, or rather King's-bench debater,* who figured a few pages back, under the *sobriquet* of "Long-headed Bob."

Although sensible of Potter's impatience, Long was little disposed to hurry himself in complying with Paul's request. At length he entered the sick-bay. Drawing a match-tub, and placing it beside his tiemate's hammock, which was swinging between the two eighteen pounders in Dunanney's dominion, Long sat himself down.

"So, there ye are at last," said Potter peevishly. "I've seed the day when you'd 'a made yer number in half the time. But it only makes surer the sign. I'm sartin of it now. A feller a-goin' never can find á feller a-comin'."

* A name given by men-of-war's men, to those who discuss passing events in the vicinity of the galley.

“What’s the matter now, Paul?” asked Long, good humouredly.

“What’s the matter! How can you ax? Have ye never no eyes? Can’t ye see?”

“See, Paul? I sees yer better—an’ any feller with half an eye can see the same. Ay, better within a week’s grog* nor ye were this time yesterday afternoon—I’m blest if ye ain’t.”

“Ah, Bob, you can’t deceive me,” said Paul, softening his asperity of tone, “can’t be worse, Bob. Outer-bound, Bob. Hove short, Bob—stay peak. Take the case, Bob—keep the combs, and write to Bet.”

“Come, come, my cock—cheer up—cheer up. Bless yer heart, I was twenty times worse nor ever ye was. Why, I was twice heaved-down for the roomatis in Haslar Hospital—reg’larly keel-out, by Joe. Cheer up, bo—; once ye comes to get yer grog again, you’ll mend like smoke an’ oakum—thrive, ay, thrive like a sucking babe.”

* The grog of the sick is stopped in ships of war.

“Ah, Bob, it’s a pity I did n’t haul my wind, when I *was* a sucking babe. ’T wou’d ’ave saved me a world o’ tortur’. No, no, Bob, I’m mortally convinced my fate ’s fixed. I sees it, Bob ; I feels it, Bob. I reads it in every face as has n’t the tongue to tell it, Bob. Moreover, Mr. Smith’s phiz, this morn, Bob, was as long as the main-to’-bowlin’. Mr. Smith’s a good man—a kind man, Bob: he is a feller as can feel for a feller, Bob ; but as for the tother, he ’s no more heart, no, nor a hangman. He an’ that pester-an’-mortar-poundin’ beggar, Billy Bolus, ought to set up shop together. They’re only fit for to tortur man. No more, Bob. Well, well ! Poor Bet !”

Here Paul muttered something to himself, in which Long could collect only the words “lose her lot like the tother three.”

Again his tiemate sought to console him, but it was of no avail ; and again in disjointed sentences, Paul poured forth his complaints.

“Can’t—can’t work agen’ wind an’ tide.

Body wo n't bear it. The bago's bad enough in the back ; but when the roomatis—" (here he gave a heavy groan)—" that thundr'ng fog's done it all ; and then to say, a fellow kept a bad look-out—a more infernaller lie never fell from the mouth o' man. Oh, Bob ! it's a terrible thing when it once comes to take hold o' yer witals. When once the roomatis comes to start your but-ends, take ye in the transoms, and shake yer floor-futtocks, why then, Bob, there's never, never nothin' as can keep an unfortunat' feller afloat—nothin'. Ah, Bob ! you'll soon have to heave the gratin' o'er the standin'-port o' the fore-sheet."*

"My eyes, Paul !" ejaculated Long, perceiving Potter's depressed state, "do, *do* be more of a man."

"I *am*, Bob, more nor a man ; for I've done *more* nor a man ought."

At this moment was heard the boatswain's hoarse bawl of—

* A nautical phrase synonymous with burying the dead at sea.

“Hands reef taupsles !”

To use his own words, Long had to “spring his luff, bolt from the bay, and pull foot for the fore-rigging.” In short, Paul’s tiemate had to proceed aloft, and tie his complement of paints on the starboard side of the fore-topsail yard.

It was blowing fresh. The “barkey,” as the boatswain phrased it, “was driving piles, pitching bows under, shipping green seas, and cooling the corns of all who footed the folksel.”

The operation of reefing occupied a tardy interval—a period unprecedented in days of yore. The topsails were difficult to spill; the stiff and stubborn canvas bagged to leeward with the blast; and the sea-going syrens in the waist, whose bright eyes were turned aloft, momentarily expected the exertions of the *earing-men* would end in a “*drop*.”

The required reef had been taken in, the yards trimmed, and the watch called. Paul had already raised himself erect in his ham-

mock, preserving his perpendicularity by a light laniard, which was attached overhead to the bolt in the beam, and which served as a sort of "man-rope," to raise, lower, or change the position of the patient in his "sack." Paul had anxiously awaited his tiemate's return. But of the bay and the bago Bob was heartily sick, and wisely preferred caulking* below to canting above.

"No, no," said Long, throwing himself on the mess chest in his berth below, "no, no, I wants no more o' the bago in the back. I've had enough of Mr. Pleasant's prate. It's a waste o' words to try an' consolidate a chap as seems detarmined, whether or no, Tom Collins, to give up the ghost afore his reg'lar time."

Paul was manifestly labouring under mental excitement. His sunken and care-worn visage betokened a troubled mind. It was obvious he was anxious to unburden himself of some weight of woe. Twice had he

* Caulking—napping on the deck.

placed his head upon his pillow, and twice, by the aid of his man-rope, had he raised himself erect in his hammock.

“Ah!” he sighed, evidently mortified at the non-return of his tie-mate, “it’s just the way o’ the world. No sooner nor I tells him to take the case, and keep the combs, nor the beggar turns his back on a body.”

Paul had here libelled his tie-mate. Bob cared little for the combs; and the “*combings*” of the fore-hatchway could attest, that Paul had equally often turned his *back* to Bob. The fact is, it would have been contrary to compact, and inconsistent with the vocation of a tie-mate, to fool away his time in *facing* his friend. As bondsmen, both were bound to *back* the other. And both were bound by mutual *ties*, which, in those days, it would have been sacrilege to *sever*.

Alas! what associations are linked with the once favourite, but long-lost phrase of

“*Tie for tie, and d—n all favours!*”

“It’s too bad!” exclaimed Paul, throwing a furtive glance at the loblolly-boy, who was occupied in the pleasing task of teasing tow, preparatory to spreading a blister-dressing for a less troublesome patient. “Never mind, I’ll send for a better man.”

Potter motioned to Bolus. But the loblolly-boy knew his man. Although *seen*, Pleasant’s signals were purposely left unanswered.

“You, Billy! You, Bolus! D’ye hear, ye lubberly grass-combin’ beggar, d’ye hear? D’ye want an unfortunet feller to waste the little wind as is left in his body in singin’ out for the like o’ you, ye tow-teasin’—blister-spreadin’—pill-rollin’—platter-faced pyeaw.”

Bolus had been too well accustomed to these complimentary calls to respond to his irritable patient; he therefore proceeded in his task. But with Paul contempt was always a punishable offence. His shoes were stowed in the head-clue of his hammock. On or off, his trotters, as he termed them, were

ever active agents in inforcing obedience to his will. Paul was a good shot. His propelled pumps had already brought Mr. Bolus to his bearings.

“What d’ye mean by that, ye unmannerly ruffian?” cried the stricken teaser of tow, applying his hand to his dexter eye. “What d’ye mean, by a-shyin’ yer shoes a’ter that sort o’ fashion, ye impatient pest? I werily b’lieves you’ve knocked the hi hout o’ my ’ead. See, too, ye blood-thirsty brute! see how you’ve sot my mouth a bleedin’. D’ ye call that the haction of a sick man?”

“And d’ ye call it the action or dooty of a loblolly-boy,” retorted Paul, “to turn a deaf ear to a *dying* man!”

“Dying! that’s a good un. No sich luck.”

Paul was about to follow up his fire; a mischievous missile was already in his hand. “Swab up, and come here, directly,” said he, in a peremptory tone, taking deliberate aim at

the head of the bleeding Bolus with the tin pot which had contained his light allowance of barley-water. "Come, stir your stumps! bear a fist, afore I sends this flyin' at yer precious pate."

The attendant, succumbing, approached his pleasant patient.

"Come nearer—nearer yet. I wants to whisper a word in yer ear."

The loblolly-boy obeyed.

"Go quietly aft," proceeded Potter, "an' whisper the parson as I now does to you, an' just say,—'Please, sir, there's a sick man as wants to see you for'ard in the bay.'"

"The parson!" exclaimed Bolus, with a stare of surprise.

"Hold yer gab, ye pratin' thief. Do as ye'r bid, and no lip. Come, make sail, be off; scud. No talk."

"Well, wait, can't ye, till I wipes my mouth. Ye wou'd n't have me face a gemman in this ere horrible figur."

And so saying, Mr. Bolus, after cooling and cleaning his blood-begrimed mouth with the tail of a wet swab, proceeded aft on his mission.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ For I would commune with you of such things
That want no ear but yours.”

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

BOLUS, who had been for some time beating and boxing about the “lower regions” in search of the chaplain, ‘convinced,’ so he phrased it, ‘that the larkin’ gemman *must* be amusing himself in one or the tother of the midshipmen’s messes,’ had found himself at fault, and had already traced Mr. Lawrence to a loftier, though less social, locality. The parson, in fact, had been for some time seated

at the weather-side of the ward-room table sipping his wine, and making himself as comfortable as he possibly could under the combined annoyances of a pile-driving head sea, a contrary triple-reefed-topsail breeze, and a set of silent and sullen companions.

The personal appearance of the pale, meagre, slovenly, slop-attired pestle-and-mortar-man, with his half-closed eye and swollen mouth, suggested to the sentinel at the ward-room door the propriety of opposing the loblolly-boy's right of admission.

"Who d'ye want? can't you speak?" interrogated the sentinel, pacing his post. "D'you want the doctor?"

"No, I does n't want *he*," responded the roller of pills.

"Who then?"

"The parson."

Thinking that Bolus was the harbinger of bad tidings, for the loblolly-boy in quest of the parson carries with it the strong presumption that somebody on board is about "to lose the

number of his mess," the marine, without further parley, admitted the miserable messenger of woe.

Entering the ward-room with an awkward air of inquisitive search, the upper lid of his 'weather-eye' sloping downward, like a lower-deck port of a rainy day, the loblolly-boy approached the lower end of the officers' table.

"D'ye want me?" said Dunannee, inquiringly.

"No, sir."

"Muster Smith, then, does n't dine *here* to-day."

"I does n't want he, neither, sir," rejoined the teaser of tow, who now, on perceiving the parson's position, crept aft behind the backs of the officers, seated on the weather-side of the table,—touched the chaplain on the shoulder, whispered a few words into his ear, and quickly withdrew.

"What's the matter, Muster Lawrence?" inquired Dunannee, observing the chaplain

suddenly rise from his chair: "I'm certain that none of my patients are in need of spiritual comfort."

"Possibly not," returned Lawrence; "but I always make it a point to comply promptly with the summons of the sick."

At the suggestion of Dunanney, the parson resumed his seat, till a servant was despatched to bring Mr. Bolus back to the ward-room.

"What's the matter with your eye, sir?" asked Dunanney, on the re-entry of the disfigured pill-man.

"Potter, sir," muttered the miserable Bolus.

"And your mooth too?"

"Potter, sir."

"And who sent ye, sir, for Muster Lawrence?"

"Potter, sir."

"Potter! Potter! What's the fellow pottering aboot?"

"He says he's dying, sir."

"Who?"

"Potter, sir."

“The scoondrel! *Dying* indeed!”

“Perhaps, doctor,” interrupted the parson, “he’s only *dying* to see me.”

“No, no, Muster Lawrence, I can’t sooffer ye to be tormented by sooch a soorly, fool-moothed, mutinous pest.”

“Deuced good man,” exclaimed Leather-lungs, accompanying his blunt remark with a corresponding thump upon the table.

“Capital leadsman,” observed the master, following in his leader’s wake.

“Keeps his boat in excellent order. He may growl,” said the junior lieutenant; “but growl-an’-go was always a good dog.”

The chaplain had already entered the sick asylum. The loblolly-boy led him to the hammock of the “dying man,” at the side of which had been already dropped a canvas screen. Placing a stool for the reverend gentleman, Bolus retired.

“I axes yer pardon, sir,” said Paul, “for dragging ye so far for’ard in such a head-sea; I does indeed, Mr. Lawrence; but ye may

depend on it, sir, there 's never another parson in the sarvus as I send for 'sides yerself," he added, offering to his pastor an awkward tender of his heated hand.

"Rather warm," said Lawrence, replacing the hand of the patient gently in his hammock. "Still," added the chaplain, "there appears to be little of fever hanging about you."

"Ah, sir, a heavier thing nor fever's a-hang-in' *here*!" sighed Paul, raising his huge, brown, weather-beaten hand to his broad brow.

"Oh! come," said Lawrence, cheeringly, "to-morrow I hope we shall find you another man."

"Another man indeed," iterated Paul, despondingly. "In course, Mr. Lawrence, ye knows what they calls a reef-pint as hangs below the yard when the sail's furled? Ye knows what I means, does n't ye, sir?"

The chaplain nodded assent.

"Well, then, that's the *man*,* sir, as you'll find *me* to-morrow."

* When the topsails are furled, and the reef-points are

“Nonsense, nonsense, man. You mus’n’t indulge this depression of spirits.”

“I does n’t, sir; but I well knows I could meet my fate the firmer, could I only lighten a little o’ this terrible load aloft.”

“Well, unburden your mind to me,” said Lawrence, consolingly. “Possibly we may manage to *lighten* a little of your load.”

The look which followed these few consolatory words would have puzzled even the pencil of the inimitable George Cruikshank. For several seconds, the starting eyes of the penitent seemed to search the very soul of his spiritual pastor; when, at length, letting loose the sluice-gates of his full feeling, he emphatically exclaimed,—

“Bless yer comfort-talkin’ tongue! I well know’d ye was never the man to refuse a helpin’ hand to a feller-cretur in trouble—I was sartin ye was n’t. Ah, Mr. Lawrence,” he added, with increased emphasis, “there is n’t a man

not tucked in, but dangle carelessly beneath the yards, they are technically termed “*Dead men.*”

or boy aboard, no, not even a *soger* in the ship, as would n't go—go *by*——”

“No expletives, Potter,” exclaimed Lawrence, with uplifted hand, cutting short the fervid deliverance of Paul’s adjuration. “I expect you will now,” added the chaplain, “reveal to me, without any reserve, every circumstance connected with your troubles. Conceal nothing. Consider me your best friend.”

For a few minutes, Potter, who had already raised himself erect in his hammock, seemed absorbed in thought. His head hung downwards; whilst his fiddling fingers were in active, though apparently unconscious, operation, plucking small particles of wool from his upper blanket. At length, turning to Lawrence, he exclaimed,—

“Well, sir, if I must reveal all, without any presarve, I thinks I can’t do better than begin with the lightest first.”

“Please yourself, Potter; but pray proceed.”

“Well, then, first an’ foremost, sir,” proceeded Paul, “I wishes to ax ye, sir, if ye thinks as the heavin’ a contrairry cat overboard *much* of a crime?”

“Cruelty to animals,” responded the parson, endeavouring to suppress a smile, “I have ever deprecated. Indeed, I look upon it as a very hard-hearted and heinous offence.”

“There it is, Mr. Lawrence. No one knows the tortur it brings to my mind at night. I sometimes thinks I feels the cretur’s claws clingin’ to my hot head, an’ every now an’ again as if she was scrapin’ and scratchin’ a hole in my burnin’ brain.”

“But pray, Potter,” asked Lawrence, “what reason can you possibly assign for the commission of so cruel an act?”

“Well, I’ll tell ye, sir.—I b’longs to the Phee-aton frigate at the time. She was a fancy ship, Mr. Lawrence—a reg’lar flyer. She’d think nothin’ o’ knockin’ ye off eleven on a bowlin’. She was a man-o’-war, Mr. Lawrence.

A man *was* a man in she. Every one know'd his work; and them as *worked* us know'd the bisness of all aboard——”

“But the cat's business?” interrupted Lawrence.

“I'm coming to that, sir. Well, sir,” continued Paul, “we was comin' from foreign at the time. Was ye ever at the Cape, Mr. Lawrence?”

“No, never.”

“Well, sir, we was comin' from *there* at the time; and just as we closes the chops o' the Channel, we was catched with just such another badgerin' breeze as this here thundrin' easterly wind. We was six-upon-four at the time, and terribly short o' water. The people below 'gins to growl, and look black one on the tother, an' the watch on deck hauls only half their strength, and works with a heavy heart. For twelve days an' thirteen nights, the wind keeps stiff and steady in the same parvarse, provokin' pint. In course, every one seed as a spell had got hold o' the ship. Some

sot it down to the score o' this, others to the score o' that.

“ At last, sir, a young feller o' the name o' Forbes detarmines the thing in another way. Fred was second captain o' the folksel in the starboard watch; a finer young feller ye never seed. He stood six foot two in his stockin' feet. He 'minds me much o' you, Mr. Lawrence. In course, he had n't the manners, or larnin', or winnin' way o' *you*, sir; but he was a chap as feered nothin' in life, an' the word o' Fred was the will of all aboard.

“ Well, sir, on the twelfth night, just as they relieves the first watch, up comes Fred on the folksel. ‘ Still,’ said Fred, lookin' to wind-'ard, an' butt'ning his monkey athaut his chest, ‘ still this beggarly breeze! Ah!’ says he, ‘ that thund'rin' parlee-voo puss is the cause on it all. Yes,’ says he, shakin' his head, ‘ Crappo's cat 's a-spittin' her spite;’ for ye see, Mr. Lawrence, 'twas an *enemy's* cat: we gets her out of a prize, a brig as we cap-

tures homeward bound from the Isle of France. ‘Come, Paul,’ says Fred, fixin’ on me to lend him a fist; ‘come down with me,’ says he, ‘I’ll soon settle her hash.’ Well, in course, sir, ’thout ever givin’ the thing as much as the turn of a thought, (an’ more ’s the pity I did n’t,) down we dives together, bread-bag in hand, to the heart o’ the hawser-tier. There was Crappo’s cat (for the ship’s corporal lends us his light,) kiled in a round kile, an’ sound asleep, in the very dientical spot as Fred said she was sure to be.

“Well, sir, the moment Fred gets a grip at her neck, she flashes her eyes,—spits fire faster nor fork-light’nin’,—sticks her tail on end, an’ strikes out with her four claws in the savagest way ever I seed with brutal beast. Howsomer, sir, we soon bundles her into the bag, brings her on deck, claps a shot in the sack, ties up the muzzle, and sends her wi’ three hearty heaves flyin’ over the lee-cat-head, five or six fathoms to looard o’ the ship. There, now, Mr. Lawrence, ye has the whole o’ the

truth, as far as consarns the cat," concluded Paul, turning to the parson, who had already risen from his seat, with his face hidden in his handkerchief.

"Lord love ye, Mr. Lawrence, don't leave me, yet," ejaculated Potter, thinking the parson was about to depart. "My worst troubles I've yet to tell."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, sir; you know I said so at startin'."

"So you did. Well, proceed," said Lawrence, resuming his seat.

"Well, sir, what I wants now to know is, whether you thinks it much of a sin when a man, leavin' the station, stops his lot."*

"What do you mean? I understand you not," replied Lawrence, affecting ignorance of Potter's question.

"Why, when a man's obligated to splice another in another place."

* When a seaman apportions part of his pay to his wife or family, it is termed "lotting."

“ Surely, Potter, you don’t mean to insinuate that you have committed bigamy ?”

“ Committed what, sir ?”

“ Why, I trust you have not married more than one wife.”

“ I am sorry to say, sir, I’ve been obligated to splice *four* in my time.”

“ Four !” exclaimed the parson, in surprise.

“ Yes, sir ; they *would* have me, whether or no.”

“ Why, you must be a fancy man with the women.”

“ I s’pose I must, sir.”

“ But surely you do not mean to say that they are all living !”

“ I dun know, sir ; can’t exactly say. In course, the one as *now* gets her lot, is well and hearty ; but they tells me she in Barbadoes and the tother in Halifax are both sot up in business, and doin’ well.”

“ Which did you marry first ?”

“ The creole, sir. She was as nice a craft as ever ye clapt eyes on, Mr. Lawrence. She

was indeed, sir. She used to bum-boat the ship. She took a fancy to me, 'cause I used to hand her traps in and out of the boat, and listen to her coloured talk atwixt the guns on the main deck. It comed on very suddenly, sir. The thing was clinched in a crack. 'Take care of yourself, for sake of Sal,' says she, one evenin', as I sees her into the boat as takes her ashore. 'Take care, Poll,' says she, (for she always called me Poll,) givin' me a squeeze of the fist as told more nor she meant her tongue to tell. Well, sir, the next mornin' she brings me off from the shore a bran new beautiful length of black ribbon to tie my tie, shovin' into my fist at the same time as nice a case of combs as ever ran through the hair of man. 'Keep dat,' says she, 'for sake of Sal. Make you tink o' Sal, when ever ye combs yer hair. Ah!' says she, heavin' a heavy sigh, 'I do nothin' but tink of you, Poll, all de blessed night.' 'And,' says I, 'I does nothin' but think of you, Sal, all the blessed morn'.' 'You say so, Poll? Then both tink o'

t'other.' 'So it seems, Sal,' says I. 'Well, s'pose, Poll, we tink both all the same as *one*.' 'I've no objection, Sal,' says I, 'though we makes two o' the thing; so if you thinks as I does, we'll soon clinch the concarn.' 'Nice man,' says she: 'such nice lub-locks,' says she, running her fingers through these here hanks o' hair. When a craft, Mr. Lawrence, comes to fiddle with a fellow's hair, there's nothin' else for it left, but to shove the ring on her finger."

The parson had great difficulty in repressing his tendency to laugh outright. But it was his business to look grave, and he accordingly mastered his features.

"But how came you to lose this first wife?"

"I did n't lose her, sir. She lost herself. When we leaves the station, 'stead of followin' the ship, she prefars to follow the sogers. So, in course, sir, I'd nothin' else for it left, but to knock off her lot. Does n't ye think she desarved it, sir?"

"Yes," returned Lawrence; "but that did

not justify you in marrying another while she was living."

"Must lot to *some* one, you know, sir."

"This is against all law, divine and human, Potter."

"That's just what I was afeard of. I only wanted to have it from your own lips, sir. But, you see, sir, the second *would* have me, as well as the first."

"Where did you pick *her* up?"

"At Halifax, sir. She, too, took a fancy to my tie, and had me afore I well know'd where I was. Fan was a cunninger craft nor Sall; she was as jealous as a she tiger. Moreover, sir, she was som'et like Crappo's cat,—had a nasty way of using her claws. So, in course, when we was ordered home, I forgets to lot Fan."

"You should never have lotted to her at all," observed the parson.

"I wishes I'd never a-seed her."

"Well, go on. I'm bound to hear you."

"Well, sir, we gets to the Cove of Cork,

and there I takes up with a third. The Irish girls, you know, Mr. Lawrence, have such terrible tongues—such coaxing winnin' ways with 'em."

"So I understand," rejoined the clergyman.

"You may depend on it, sir, they 'd weather on a knowin'er man nor me. Once they comes to bring their talk to bear on a body, there's no refusin' em:—so, you see, sir, luggin' me along to the Holy Ground,* Biddy soon gets the priest to do the job."

"Worse and worse!" exclaimed the chaplain.

"Lord help me," was the ejaculation of the penitent. "Ah! woman's, sir, the ruin o' man."

"Then why did you take a fourth?"

"Could n't help it, sir. When once you get in the way o' the thing, you can't, can't help

* There are two *patches of Paradise* in the vicinity of Cove. One is called the "West Holy Ground," the other, the "East Holy Ground."

it ; and *you 'd* say so too, sir, if you once got a glimpse o' Bet."

" A glimpse of who ?"

" She as I lots to now. She 's the best o' the bunch ; and that 's the reason," he added pettishly, " that the poor thing must lose her turn, as well as the t'other three. But, if I only gets over this here beggarly bago, I'll never forsake *she*,--no, that I won't—never, Bet !"

" This emotion, Potter, does you credit," returned the parson ; " but I wish it had been manifested for your first wife, who is now living, instead of your *last*, however amiable she may be."

" I see, Mr. Lawrence, you likes the Creoles—nice-built craft. None of your wall-sided wenches."

" Nonsense, Potter ! we are met on serious business. I am surprised at your levity. I shall leave you," continued Lawrence, rising to retire, but all the time laughing in his sleeve.

“ I axes your pardon ; I does, indeed, Mr. Lawrence. I meant no manner of offence. I can’t spare ye yet,—indeed I can’t, sir ; the worst is still to come.”

“ I’m sorry to hear it, Potter. I can’t conceive anything more reprehensible than deception toward the sex. But if your conscience is still further burthened, I must insist on your adopting a more solemn demeanour. Jokes do not become a man in your situation.”

“ Ah, it’s no joke, sir, I promise you,” said Potter, mistaking the admonition of the chaplain ; “ and you would say so too, sir, if you only seed the same. The bell exactly struck three in the middle watch, when it first hung over my hammock.”

“ What ?”

“ The white skeleton hand, sir. It held the broken bit of the same stone. The more I shuts my eyes to shut it out, the more closer it seemed to come. Oh ! it was a horrid,

horrid sight, sir. The perspiration dropped from my forehead like the dripping of a wet swab."

"To what do you allude?"

"Do ye 'members, sir, the time as we drops down to St. Helen's, to avoid the Court Martial at Spithead?"

"I do."

"You knows Mr. Leatherlungs *would* send a boat a-shore for holy-stones?"

"Yes, I remember the circumstance."

"I was coxswain of the yawl, sir. Mr. Leagur had charge of the boat. Young Mr. Darcy was with us, too; a nice-mannered young gentleman he is. We takes a parcel o' top-mauls with us, to smash the stones. 'Well,' says Mr. Leagur, speaking to the boat's crew, 'bear a hand, boys, and fill the boat, and I'll give ye a gallon o' rum when we gets back to the ship.' Well, 'Will's the word,' says Short—him as we calls Slashin' Sam—'follow me,' says Sam; '*I'll* soon shew ye the way to fill the boat.' Well, upon

this we takes the top-mauls, an' all but the boat-keeper follows in the wake o' Sam; while Mr. Leagur an' young Mr. Darcy takes a couple o' ship's muskets, an' goes a-shootin' another way.

“ Well, sir, after working a traverse inland a short half mile or so, we falls in with a churchyard clear of a livin' soul. ‘ Here we has 'em,’ says Sam; ‘ here's a nest on 'em!’ says he. If we does n't soon fill the boat now, then there's never no snakes in Virginny. Remember the gallon o' rum, my boes,’ says Sam, flingin' himself, top-maul and all, on the top of a tombstone clear o' grass. ‘ Smash away, my sons,—here's holy-stones * enough,’ says Sam, ‘ for every ship in the sarvus.’ An' with that we falls to a-breakin' the carved stones, an' carries away more nor a couple

* Doubtless the officers who served in H. M. S. D——n——k, some nine-and-twenty years since, may recall to their recollection an incident which, in many particulars, bore a strong affinity to the above narration.

o' tons of broken bits, with all sot o' letters on 'em, large an' small, gilt an' black."

"Why, this was nothing less than sacrilege, Potter," observed the reverend gentleman.

"Ah! yes, sir, if it was n't, I would n't 'ave seed what I did in the middle watch."

"What did you see?"

"The most frightfullest thing as ever tortur'd the sight o' mortal man. The sound was hardly out o' the third bell, when a white bony shrivelled hand hangs over my hammock, clinchin' in its fist the feller piece of the broken bit; the same dientical bit as I 've so long been a' tryin' to grind out on the torturin' words

'In Memory of'

But no; neither dry-rubbin' nor wet-stonin' can start a single letter. They seems to stick to the stones, as if detarmined to remind me of my wicked deed. And then, this here ghost of a hand facin' me, wi' the t'other bit as carried on it the full-starin' name o' the Christian soul it kiyered. Ah!

Ann Dobbs ! Ann Dobbs !” sighed Potter, “ I ’ll never, never forget yer frightful fist !”

“ This unloading of your conscience cannot fail to be beneficial to you,” said Lawrence. “ You will sleep happier for it to-night ; and, I think we shall not find you to-morrow, like a reef-point, dangling down from the topsail yard. Good afternoon. Compose yourself.”

“ Heaven bless you, sir !” ejaculated the penitent Potter. “ I feel myself another man already.”

CHAPTER XV.

“ Must I bite ?

Yes, certainly ; and out of doubt, and out
Of questions too, and ambiguities.”

HENRY V.

AFTER contending for two and twenty days with a contrary wind, the Nonsuch was now at noon abreast of the “ Ram-head,” a projecting point in the vicinity of Cawsand-bay.

With the exception of the atmospheric haze peculiar to an easterly wind, the day was beautifully bright. The surface of the glittering sea was gently ruffled, which, for leagues along the Cornish coast, was studded with tiny craft,

extending their tanned sails to the brisk breeze.

Hardly had the Nonsuch 'made her number' to the signal post on Maker Tower, ere a boat, pulling round Penlee Point, was seen to approach the ship.

"Who's il that boat?" inquired the baronet.

"Mister Penn, the pilot, sir," responded Mr. Fuller, from the break of the poop.

"You seem, youlg gentlemal, to have his lame very pat. How do you low it's him?"

"By his white coat, sir," rejoined the signal mid, in a confident tone.

"His white boat?"

"No, sir, his white *coat*."

"Yes, sir, Mr. Fuller's right enough," said Leatherlungs, eyeing with his glass the white-coated sitter in the white-painted cutter on the lee-bow of the ship. "That's *old Welcome-all*—that's him—know him by his red mug."

"Wol lows him by his white coat, alother by his red mug. Pray, Mr. Muddle," said Sir Montague, addressing the master, who had

also brought his "berge*" to bear upon the closing boat. "Pray have *you* any particular mark by which to low this mal?"

"Mark! yes, sir. Know him by his mooring mark."

"His *mooril*' mark, Mr. Muddle?"

"Yes, sir; by his right hand. Whenever he holds up his right hand, it's a sure signal to unbit the best bower. In moderate weather he always makes it a rule to run the two cables clean out 'thout coming to a check. Yes, sir, that's him. Big as a butt. Bigger in the bilge than Captain Gorge. Swear to his paunch any where."

The "marks" and remarks of Mr. Muddle were little to the baronet's taste. The senator withdrew, and transported the presence to the poop.

"Luff, quarter-master, luff; and deaden her way through the water," cried the first lieutenant, again looking at the boat with his glass. "Ease off the head sheets. Rope along

* Spy-glass.

ready for the boat? Mr. Darcy, side clear? Sideboys ready? Stern fast in the chains?"

"All ready, sir."

"Now, parson," continued Leatherlungs, turning to Lawrence, who was walking on the weather-side of the quarter-deck, "now we shall have all the news. Old Penn's a regular walking newspaper. Capital fellow after a long cruise. Gives ye the marrow of the matter in a minute. Not so much chattering there in the main-top. Boat nearly 'longside, Mr. Darcy?"

"She's just this very moment, sir, got hold of the rope."

"Smartest midshipman in the ship. Wish I had him in a good eighteen-gun brig."

"And that I was your first lieutenant," whispered the parson.

"Might have a worse."

The portly Palinurus now ascended the side, and made his bow to the king's parade.

"Welcome all! Welcome all! Best bower unbitted? See you've got a jury-bowsprit:

lost t' other in the *Brest* business? Who 's your captain now? Just hit the time of tide, Mister Master. Run 'em both clean out, you know. No stoppage in the tier. Mind your weather helm, my man. Wind sure to head you as you open with the Fish-house. Beautiful weather! have n't had a drop o' rain for nearly a week."

In a similar strain of verbal rapidity, the white-coated functionary, wending his way aft, ascended the poop, without once turning to a single soul, or seeming to require one word of response to any of his queries or rambling remarks.

"Most obedient, sir," said he, saluting Sir Montague on the break of the poop. "Sha n't bring up upon this tack. Must make another board or two, to fetch our berth. I see ye shew your *mark*, sir. 'T was a nice business, I 'm told. Tells a better tale than the *other*. They call it here the Foggy fight. People are not pleased with it. Got out of it badly."

"Blown, by the Lord! already," said Leatherlungs, aside.

"Thel, the Royal Sovereign *has* arrived, has she?" said the baronet, interrogatively.

"No, *she* be n't; but the Malta and Windsor Castle are both in the bay. The two lame ducks are up the harbour. Got terribly mauled. Nearly battered to pieces. Round with her now, sir, if you please."

The ship was hove about, the yards trimmed, and the colloquy on the poop resumed.

"I have no doubt, Mr. Pilot," said Sir Montague, addressing 'old Welcome-all' by an appellative which was very unwelcome to the old gentleman's ear, for Penn was not an ordinary pilot—he performed the part of Harbour-master to the Channel fleet, and therefore always sought to sink the lower title, "I have no doubt, Mr. Pilot," proceeded Sir Montague, in a more distant and dignified tone; "that the phrase of 'foggy-fight' has been purposely adopted to convey a libellous insinuation, but it should be borne in mind that it was a very natural result, and not what should

create aly surprise. People displeased, ildeed ! People should mild their owl affairs, Mr. Pilot, and lot meddle with matters of which they cal lo little.”

“ I don’t think, Sir Montague, the folks ashore will agree with you *there*. A very different result *was* expected. Indeed, now nothing else is talked of but a court martial.”

“ Ah, I ’ll sool settle that whel I go to towl,” said the senator, in a self important tone. “ Wol story is always good ’till the other’s told.”

“ ’Pon my word, sir ——No higher, my man ; watch the flaws off the land—— ’Pon my word, sir, we’ve had so many different versions of the matter, that one’s quite at a loss which to believe; but the fact is, Sir Montague,” added Mr. Penn, with marked emphasis, “ your *over cautious* people seldom give satisfaction. We shall haul the main-sail up in stays, sir.”

The phrase “over cautious” appeared to give little satisfaction to the senator. Leather-lungs caught his eye. He saw his commander’s mettle was up.

“ When you walt, Mr. Pilot——”

“ I’d rather you’d call me by my *name*, sir,” interrupted Mr. Penn.

“ I choose to call you *Pilot*, sir, and whel you walt the ship hove il stays or sail shorteld, you’ll please to commulicate with the first lieutelalt. Your observatiols, Mr. Pilot, are very ulcalled for, ald very ulbecomil’ of a mal in your statiol.”

And so saying, the baronet descended from the poop, and sullenly retired to his cabin.

The astonished Mr. Penn had already linked the arm of the first lieutenant, and drawing him aside, said—

“ Bless my soul, what’s the matter with the captain? He seems a very touchy sort of a gentleman. The other captains always seem so well pleased when I give them any of the news that’s going.”

“ Hit him d—d hard,” rejoined Leather-lungs, with a significant shake of the head, “ d—d hard : *felt* it, too. Yer ‘ *over cautious* people’ was a sharp shot ; and as for your *foggy*

fight, 'twas a regular floorer. Got the worst of it *there*. Too much metal for some-of-us. Could n't stand the fire of a three-decker. Capital name—foggy fight,—capital," added the lieutenant, chuckling to himself.

"Why, I thought you got crippled in the *other* business?"

"What business?" interrogated Leatherlungs.

"What business! Why, old Billy Blue's, to be sure. What, then, you have n't heard of the *Brest* brush?"

"The *Brest* brush!" said Leatherlungs, in a tone of surprise.

"Ay, cuts out your affair altogether. What have you done with Calder?"

"Calder! What of him?"

"What of *him*? 'Pon my word you seem a very strange set in this ship altogether. You may well call her the *Nonsuch*."

This sort of equivocal was interrupted by having again to tack the ship, when Lawrence, who now joined the pilot on the poop, elucidated Mr. Penn's *contre temps*, touching the

“Brest brush” and the “Foggy-fight.” The first had a reference to a gallant affair of Admiral Cornwallis with Ganteaume, who came gasconading out of Brest Roads, and anchored his fleet under shelter of the strong batteries newly erected in Camaret Bay. Cornwallis attacked the French after weighing from this anchorage, and drove them back into Brest, under a tremendous fire of shot and shell from all the batteries, extending along the coast from Camaret Bay to Point St. Mathews. The “Foggy-fight” referred to Sir Robert Calder’s recent rencontre* with Villeneuve.

“’Twas touch and go with old Coachee,”† resumed Mr. Penn; “he got a crack on the chest with a bit of a broken shell.”

A new light had now broken upon Leatherlungs. “By the Immaculate Man!” he exclaimed, emphatically, stamping the deck, “we

* Sir Robert Calder engaged the combined fleets for four hours in a dense fog.

† Another sobriquet for Admiral Cornwallis.

are the most unfortunate fellows afloat. It's always the case. Sure to be out of every thing *good* that's going."

"Up with the foresail, if you please, sir. Stand by the best bower. Let go the anchor. Now, sir,—no check. Two cables clean out, and we'll moor her in no time."

And so saying, Mr. Penn's commands were complied with, and H. M. ship was soon seen

"Moored in Cawsand Bay."

CHAPTER XVI.

“ Francis Feeble!

Here, sir.

What trade art thou, Feeble?

A woman’s tailor, sir.

Well said, good woman’s tailor! well said, courageous Feeble! Thou wilt be as valiant as the wrathful dove, or most magnanimous mouse.”

THE Nonsuch had already undergone a general refit. Hulked in Hamoaze for six weeks and upwards, the “Little Liners” began to diminish in muster. “The victualling list” assumed a sensible decrease. What with “long leave,”* and “short leave,” and “French leave,” and, as Toms termed it, “dissatisfied

* When the foremastmen obtain leave to go home and see their friends, the permission is technically termed ‘long leave.’

hands taking to their legs and walking Spanish," her complement had faded down to a Flemish account.

This decrease of the ship's crew excited in Leatherlungs considerable concern ; but, in the senator, it produced a feeling the very reverse, inasmuch, as the " short of complement return " afforded to Sir Montague, now that Parliament was up, a plausible pretext for further extension of leave. During the protracted period in which the ship had been refitting in port, and while Leatherlungs had been labouring like a slave, Sir Montague was loitering his time in town, employing every effort, in conjunction with his " motherly wife " (as Lawrence had styled the senator's spouse), to keep pace with the fashionable follies of the day.

Indeed, save in some trifling disparity of two or three-and-twenty years of age, the dowager countess and her loving lord were well suited. Lady Puffington had long borne the reputation of being the most unmeaning, pompous, stiffly-starched piece of antiquated

pride that ever pampered pug or poodle within a coroneted carriage. The besotted vanity of giving aristocratic dinners engrossed all her thoughts; and composing paragraphic puffs descriptive of her "splendid fetes" and "elegant entertainments," for the fashionable columns of the *Morning Post*, occupied all her literary leisure. But, though weak in mind, feeble and decrepid in frame, still the countess was strong in purse; and the senator was too much of a statesman not to preserve amicable relations with his ancient ally.

But to our tale.

At length the *Nonsuch* departed port. *Hamoaze* was lightened of the *Little Liner*. The ship had already taken up her berth in *Cawsand Bay*, where she was to complete her complement, till Sir Montague had finished fatiguing his friends in town.

"The admiral's tender's hailing, sir," cried *Weatherley*, standing on the break of the poop.

“The deuce she is,” returned the first lieutenant, flying to the gangway.

“She wants to come alongside, sir. She’s full o’ men,” rejoined the quarter-master.

“I say, Toms, look there,” said Leatherlungs, presenting his glass to his messmate, after taking a searching view of the vessel closing under sail. “Look there! by the Lord Harry, the tender’s decks are swarming with Lord-Mayor’s-men, and jail-birds of every cut an’ colour. Twig how they’ve docked their long togs. Did ye ever see such a beggarly brown-coated greasy group? Why, there’s not a blue jacket among’em. By the Immaculate Man! it’s too bad, and we so short of A. B.’s.”

“Never mind! grin and bear it: our luck’s to come,” returned Toms, consolingly.

The cutter had now shot up alongside of the ship, a venerable “young gentleman,” pertaining to the guard-ship, attired in a greasy garb which had once passed muster for the uniform

of a master's mate, presented to Leatherlungs on the quarter-deck a "list of five-and-forty newly raised men."

"Well, hand 'em up," said the first lieutenant. "Let's have a look at 'em. Not troubled, I take it, with bed an' baggage. Won't require a whip on the main-yard, eh? Come, Mr. Leagur, muster these men on the larboard side of the quarter deck. Let them toe a line, till we see what they're made of."

The "docked-tailed" fraternity had now to answer to the interrogations of the first lieutenant.

"What were you, my man, before you left your friends?" asked Leatherlungs, addressing the first on the list, with his wonted bluntness.

"I'd no frinds to lave, sir," responded the interrogated, in a broad Milesian brogue.

"Lucky fellow! What trade were you?"

"What thrade was I? Sorra thrade ever throubled me. My father before me was a gintleman, but ——"

"Oh! we don't want gentlemen a-board a

man-o'-war," interrupted Leatherlungs. "Yer gentlemen are d—d troublesome fellows afloat. Mr. Leagur," added the first lieutenant, "let this *gentleman* do his duty in the starboard watch of the waist. And where do *you* come from, my man?" proceeded Leatherlungs, addressing a miserable, half-starved, bilious-looking wight, clad in a tailless coat, which was closely buttoned up to the throat, to conceal his lack of linen.

"I comes from Lunnun, sir."

"What's your trade?"

"A silk-veaver, sir."

"A fine-spun blade indeed. And what were *you*, my man?" continued Leatherlungs, turning to the next in rotation.

"Ven bisness vorn't slack, I jobbed a little in the black line; but, ye see, sir, the season was so werry healthy, master vos hobligated to discharge most o' his men, and *me* 'mongst the rest."

"Ah! I see: the black line, I suppose, is another name for a sweep?"

“No, sir,” returned the cockney, indignantly, “mine vos a more respectabler bisness nor that ere.”

“Well, come, what was this respectable business?”

“A hundertaker’s man, sir.”

The confession of this calling was too much for Leatherlungs, who loudly ejaculated, “By the Immaculate Man! this beats *some* of our turnpike bills. What do you think of that, eh, Toms?”

“Think—that we shall now have funerals performed on the shortest notice.”

The heroes of Tower-hill had now, with the exception of one, answered to their several names, and confessed their several callings. Pressmen, compositors, paper-stainers, glass-blowers, sausage-makers, saddlers, and lamp-lighters were to be found in this medley muster. The last on the list was thus accosted,

“Why, my man, what age are you? You

must be turned forty. Late in life to try your fortune afloat."

"I've thryed it afloat before to-day, sir," returned the speaker, in accents very trying to the Naval ear.

"What 's your name?"

"Phelan Fitzgerald, sir."

"High-flying name. Purser's, I suppose. Any trade?"

"Not exactly, sir; though I have thryed two or three lines o' life in my day. Among the rest, I tuck to the saa. I sarved a short time in the short pace, sir."

"In what ship?"

"In the *Juste*—Sir Edmund Nagle, sir."

"Were you in her in the Bear-Haven *business*?"

"No, sir, I left her before that."

"I see—got *leave* to see your friends, I suppose?"

"I was left *behind*, one day, sir," returned the Milesian, in a sly, significant tone.

“I understand you. Come, that’s honest. Well, where did you do duty in the *Juste*?”

“I assisted the gunner’s yeoman till he died; and then, as I could write a good hand, and keep the books, they made me take his place.”

“Gad, you’re the very fellow we want. Mr. Gordon,” said Leatherlungs, turning to the gunner, “now torment me no more about another yeoman: here’s one ready made to your hand—take him. Fitzgerald, understand you’ll do duty as gunner’s yeoman.”

And so saying, the first lieutenant dismissed the motley group, consigning them over to the tender sympathies of the mate of the lower deck.

Doubtless, in the newly appointed gunner’s yeoman, the reader will readily recognise an old acquaintance. Mr. Phelan Fitzgerald was no other than the valorous Phelan O’Finn, who had sunk his patronymic, thinking even at that period the great *O’* prefixed to his name was not likely to serve him afloat. Since his fail-

ure in his amatory agency, O'Finn had been sadly put to his shifts ; and, in the year 1801, had to dock the tails of his long togs, and bear up for the Tower tender.

Leatherlungs had hardly dismissed his brown-coated recruits, ere the midshipman, who had been sent ashore for the ship's letters, delivered into his hand an epistle from Lawrence, who had been for some days absent on Admiralty leave.

The subjoined, as Mr. Waddy would say, is a true copy of the reverend gentleman's letter.

“ London, October 15th, 180-

“ Salopian Coffee-house.

“ My dear Leatherlungs,

“ Difficulty in procuring franks at Harley-street must plead my apology for not writing before. The *free* list in that quarter seems only to be extended to the favoured few.

“ Twice within the week have I called and left a card, which might as well have been dropped in the fore-hold. The shoulder-knotted gentry

of a certain establishment are the pertest puppies that ever powder'd pate or strutted in silken hose. Any gentleman's card, to which may be affixed the letters R. N. is received with a sneer and cock of the nose, as if the olfactory nerves of the laced lacquey suffered from the effluvia of pitch and tar. The French have an adage, '*Tel maître, tel valet,*' which, Toms will tell you, signifies, 'Like master, like man.'

"Yesterday, however, I was fortunate enough to find the dowager's most influential footman in a patronising mood.—'Her ladyship,' said he, receiving my card, 'I think is disposed to see *you* to-day;' and, without saying another word, the fellow leisurely ascending the drawing-room stairs, hailed me from the top of the landing, 'to walk up.' Little prepared was Pill-garlick for the salute under which he was about to be received. Talk of a royal salute, the din was nothing compared to the canine cry that assailed my ears the moment the drawing-room door was opened, and my name

announced. Fancy a couple of cock-tailed, black-nosed fat pugs—a brace of white-whiskered, lion-crested poodles—a hairless Italian greyhound—and a bow-legged, waddling lap-dog, suddenly starting from their respective rugs, giving tongue and yelling in different discordant keys. Never was beggar with wallet on his back so bow-wow'd and bark'd at. Her ladyship sought to command silence; but the dowager seems to have about the same notion of commanding dogs, that *Some-of-us* have of commanding men. 'Sit down, sir,' said she, dictatorially: 'the dogs require you only to be seated, to be silent.' But the dowager was out in her reckoning: the undisciplined and spoilt pets kept up the yell for several minutes after I had taken to my chair.

"Despite of paint and patches, the countess is indisputably the most stiff, stately, unsightly piece of pomposity *I* ever saw. If antiquity can entitle her to claim prescriptive veneration, she certainly has a right to seek general adoration. How any man, arriving at the years of

discretion, could have selected for a spouse such a fleshless piece of faded furniture, is to me a perfect puzzle. Positively, she is a true antidote to love; and her cold and icy deportment must, even in the sharer of her purse, freeze every thing like a feeling of friendship. And yet, although her ladyship must have seen her sixty-fifth summer, she speaks of her ‘*dear Sir Montague*’ and languishes her great glassy goggles as if she were a newly-made bride of eighteen.

“Yesterday, I met, in Charing Cross, your old friend, Sir Christopher Blunt. He is just the same rattling fellow as ever. His opinion of *Some-of-us* is very flattering. He says, as usual, that he gives the go-bye to every brother Blue he meets in the street, and cuts direct every R.N. he may happen to meet in his walks west of Somerset House. But the other day, when lounging in Bond Street, in company with a Right Hon. nob, Sir Christopher brought him up all standing. I think I never heard a readier retort. ‘Well!’ said

Some-of-us, who had under his arm the lavender-scented Lord C——; ‘well, Blunt, what are *you* doil’ il towl, eh?’ ‘I was just thinking,’ retorted Sir Kit, ‘as I saw you swaggering up, to put the same question to *you*; but, ’pon my soul, I could n’t bring myself to be sufficiently impertinent!’ Blunt tells me that the baronet blushed blue, and that the sweet-scented peer looked particularly sour.

“Sir Kit related to me an excellent anecdote touching the awkward position in which the dowager’s sudden indisposition placed the whole of the Harleyan household.

“Lady Puffington had issued cards for a ‘tearing rout;’ but on the afternoon of the night on which her crammed rooms were to suffocate her aristocratic friends, her ladyship was seized with a sudden attack of what her medical attendant termed ‘determination of blood to the head.’ The baronet never was so beset. His pen was going at the rate of ten knots an hour, putting off his numerous invited guests. Footmen, coachmen, grooms,

helpers, and stable boys were despatched in all directions. One flying to the Duchess of D——, another to the Countess This, the Viscountess That, Lord So-and-so, and Sir Somebody Something. But in his anxiety to postpone his party, it had quite escaped the baronet's recollection to recal the *paid* puff descriptive of her ladyship's fête, which had been sent for insertion, and which, on the following morning, duly appeared in the fashionable columns of the Morning Post. Sir Christopher says, the *exposé* will hasten *Some-of-us* back to Plymouth. By the by, I understand we are doomed to return to our old station. *Some-of-us* would insinuate that Lord Nelson was most anxious for his company off Cadiz. His lordship's peculiar discernment, in knowing the 'right sort,' would warrant the suspicion that *Some-of-us* was drawing the 'long bow.'

"Tell Toms his glass is thoroughly repaired. Dollond says, it is now as good as new. And pray acquaint young Darcy that his mother

is in good health, but complains sadly of his silence. I hope the caulkers in the gun-room have not capsised my traps, but I dare say Toms has taken care of my books. Tell the General that it is no easy matter to find a sash long enough to encircle twice his delicate waist. Remember me to all my messmates. I shall leave town the day after to-morrow.

“ Adieu, ever yours,

“ My dear Leatherlungs,

“ LAWRENCE LAWRENCE.

“ P.S. The baronet rides daily in Hyde Park, mounted on a long-tailed long-backed white steed. Sir Kit says that the wags at the west end designate him the ‘ Sea Horse ! ’ but that *he* has found for him a more appropriate name, and calls him the ‘ *Fresh-Water Ass !* ’ ”

CHAPTER XVII.

“ Inhospitable churl !
Thou dost forget thy own place, and my claims.
Thine house ! 'Tis mine, and I will compel thee
To a more civil course.”

MASSINGER.

SINCE we last left the Little Liner in Cawsand Bay, the battle of Trafalgar and several other glorious actions had been added to the proud memorials of our annals, whilst the Nonsuch, from Sir Montague's predilection for parliamentary napping, continued on the pleasurable service of “ Channel groping.” For two years longer were the officers and crew doomed to fret and fag on this harassing service, whilst,

pending the greater portion of the time, the senator's place was supplied by an acting captain.

During this period, the history of the *Nonsuch* was barren of any event worthy of record ; and therefore the "log" of His Majesty's ship, to use the official phrase of our "Affectionate Friends," has been purposely "dispensed with."

The *Nonsuch* was now at Portsmouth, where she had been ordered to be paid. While here, Darcy received intelligence from his mother of the sudden death of Waddy, who expired on the Northern circuit during the dog-days. He had been much excited in court, by a perverse and abusive witness ; and after great exertion, followed by a verdict against his client, he left the court in a violent bodily heat, drank cold water, was seized by a raging fever, and died, after an illness of two days.

Mrs. Waddy was at this time enjoying the sea breezes at Dover, at which place young Darcy, now entering his seventeenth year, was

summoned to attend her, that he might consult with her on the new position wherein she was placed by the death of her husband. Leave being obtained from Sir Montague Mute, the young man started from Portsmouth to London ; and having promised his messmate Fuller, that he would convey a packet from him to his family residing near Hythe, Darcy sent his baggage onwards, cut across from Canterbury to the house of his friend's father, delivered his charge, and walked thence to Hythe, where he understood a coach would convey him to Dover. He had miscalculated the length of his walk, which was retarded by most untoward weather ; and on arriving at Hythe, he ascertained that no conveyance for Dover was to be had that night.

In this predicament, he looked about for a place where he could put up ; and, after some search, came upon the only house which seemed to give any indication of "entertainment for man or beast." It was a little low tavern, denominated the "Lord Howe," into

which he entered, and called lustily about him, requiring supper and a bed.

“Very sorry, sir, but you can’t have a bed here to-night,” said the landlord, in answer to his application.

“Then, here I remain, in this parlour. Tack or sheet, I don’t start. Where else am I on such a night as this to seek shelter? Seven-eighths of the inhabitants of this dull, dreary, petrified-looking town of yours are a’ bed and asleep. Not a light is to be seen anywhere, though it’s only ten o’clock; so, my friend, I repeat that, whether you have a bed to spare or not, I don’t intend to move out of this house to-night. Hark at the rain! Do you suppose I’m so in love with a wet skin, as to seek it in the streets this drenching weather? No, no, thank you. Bad enough to be soaked with salt water at sea. What can I have for supper?”

“Why, I’m sorry to say I ar’n’t got nothing in the house,” replied the landlord, rather sulkily.

“ Well, well, I ’m not particular. A couple of eggs and a rasher will do.”

“ We fried our last bit of bacon to-day along with some liver, and there ar’ n’t none left; and as to eggs, Lord bless you! we never has any of our own laying, for the bum-boat women belonging to Deal comes over here, and carries ’em by cart-loads to the men-of-war in the Downs.”

“ You may tell that to the marines,” observed Darcy. “ We know too well what men-of-war’s eggs are. However, some supper I must have. I ’m not going to sit up all night upon an empty stomach. Have you no cold meat ?”

“ Not a bit, sir.”

“ No cheese ?”

“ Why, sir, being rather short off for dinner to-day, we were obligated to make out with the cheese, and there ar’ n’t nothing but the rind left.”

“ Rather agreeable, this,” muttered Darcy.

“ Very sorry,” said the landlord; “ but my

house, you see, ar' n't calculated for travellers. We never has no other company but a few neighbours, as drops in to take their glass o' liquor, one with the tother, in a friendly way, so we never provides nothing to eat. But, there's another house in the place, and I should n't wonder if they could cook you a bit of some 'ut, provided they ar' n't gone to bed.'

Darcy was beginning to feel that his resolution to remain was rather shaken, and to deliberate within himself whether he had not better take the landlord's advice, and look out for other quarters, when a savoury vapour, as if some culinary operation was going on at no great distance, was perceptible in the room. Darcy's olfactory nerves had been rendered too keen by his walk across the country not to detect this, even in its first faint approaches. Looking hard at his host, who seemed rather embarrassed, he said,

"Why, landlord, how is this? You tell me I can't have any supper, when, by Jove, I smell most decided symptoms of as good a

meal as would satisfy the port-admiral of Portsmouth. Come, come, man, don't be so shy of me. I can pay well enough for what I eat and drink; so put me a knife and fork on your supper-table to-night."

"Supper-table! Why, Lord love you, sir, we've had our supper a matter o' two hours ago. My wife's gone to bed, and I was going to follow her when you knocked at the door."

"How, then," rejoined Darcy, "do you account for this smell of cooking?"

"Why, now you speak of it, I *do* smell something, certainly," said Boniface. "Oh, I know what it is," he continued: "it's old Patty cleaning out the frying-pan as we had our bacon and liver fried in to-day for dinner. Poor old soul! she's mighty particular in keeping her pots and pans clean and wholesome."

Darcy could urge nothing further, though he did not believe a word the landlord said. One thing, however, was clear, namely, that the man wanted to get rid of him: a convic-

tion that only strengthened the young midshipman's determination to stay. He felt that, being a traveller, he had a right to remain in any place of public entertainment; and, moreover, his curiosity and suspicion were so roused by his host's conduct, that he was determined not to budge. So he settled himself in his chair, told the landlord to bring him a tankard of ale and a crust of bread, and took up his position for the night.

Seeing that the determination of his guest was not to be shaken, the host, evidently disconcerted, withdrew to the tap-room or kitchen, separated from the apartment where Darcy sat only by a wooden partition. In this a buxom wench was occupied, by the light of a blazing fire, frying sausages, while around her stood three or four sea-faring men, in rough pea-jackets, and one in a smock frock.

"I say, Robinson," said the landlord to one of the men, "you must eat your supper in silence to-night, and by the kitchen fire too."

“Why so?”

“Because this here young fellow as come in half an hour ago, means to keep possession of the parlour, and wo’n’t turn out till morning.”

“Wo’n’t turn out! Turn him over to me: I’ll soon see how the land lies. No, no; it wo’n’t do for the likes of he to clap a stopper on our fun for the night.”

“I tell you what, Robinson,” rejoined the host, “you had better mind what you’re about. The young chap is a mettlesome kind of fellow; and, moreover, he’s a naval officer.”

“So much the better: manage him the sooner. Easiest chaps in the world to manage, if you only takes ’em on the right tack. Capital fellows ashore: always spends their money like men.”

Robinson had already left the landlord, and entered the parlour.

“Sarvant, sir,” said he, approaching Darcy. “Wet night, sir: a dirtier one I never seed.”

“Dirty, indeed,” returned Darcy; “for which reason, I suppose, one is doomed to meet with dirty treatment.”

“What’s the matter, sir? you seems to be a little out of sorts, or so.”

“You would be out of sorts, too, old fellow, were you refused bed and board on such a night. Pretty thing, indeed, after a wet walk, to throw oneself down on the deck, and prick for the softest plank.”

“Need n’t do that, young gemman. I dare say some ’un can find you a bed in the town.”

“Do you belong to the house?” asked Darcy.

“No, sir, I has a house of my own.”

“Well, can’t you give me a shake down for the night?”

“Why, I might, if so be as the old woman was at home; but she’s been away now more nor a week, doctoring our only daughter as lays ill at Dover.

“That’s the very thing, then. I can get your daughter’s bed.”

"No, you can't. She's got her bed with her."

"You appear all alike, a most inhospitable set. You should be sent somewhere to learn manners."

"I've learned manners afore to-day."

"You! why, were you ever at sea?"

"A man may be a sea-faring man, and not much at sea, neither."

"How came you to wear that waggoner's frock, then?"

"'Cause I've changed my line o' life."

"Ah, I smell a rat. Run from the service, eh?" said Darcy.

"No, I never *runs* on any service but my own. I was once a river-pilot."

"A river-pilot, eh? You're the very man for me; for as the street to-night is little better than a running river, I shall require a pilot to conduct me to my moorings, if I'm to go out for a bed. Come, old fellow, I'll give you a crown for a shake down to-night."

"Do you mean at my house, sir?"

"Yes, why not?"

"I does n't sleep there myself."

"Perhaps that's the reason you sent the old woman away. But talking is dry work. Suppose we have a glass of grog together."

"No objection in the world, sir. I'll go to the landlord, and order some."

Robinson left the room, and two glasses of rum and water were speedily brought in by a servant girl.

"Pray, my dear," said Darcy, "who is that talkative old fellow in the smock frock?"

"A friend of master's, sir."

"Do you think he can give me a bed?"

"He can, if he likes; for he's a house-keeper, and a man well to do in the world. He wants me to go and live with him."

"Well, and why do n't you?"

"Servant-maids never stays long with him, sir."

"Why not?" inquired Darcy.

"'Cause they say that queer noises are

heard in his house in the middle of the night time; and you know, sir, that girls do n't like to be frightened out of their sleep."

"Queer noises!" echoed Darcy, smiling. "Not so bad, I suppose, as holy-stoning over a fellow's head in the morning watch."

"Can't say, sir."

"Well, I should have no objection to sleep in his house. I do n't mind noise."

"I do so wish you would sleep just for once at Mr. Robinson's, sir. A real gentleman, and, moreover, a naval officer like you are, would soon drive the ghosts away to the bottom of the Red Sea; and then the girls would n't be frightened no more."

Robinson now returned to the room; the glasses were quickly emptied; and, mollified by the liquor, the old man consented that Darcy should have a bed for the night in his house, towards which the new companions now started.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ Yonder shines Aurora’s harbinger ;
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
Troop home to church yards : damned spirits all,
That in cross-ways and floods have burial,
Already to their wormy beds are gone ! ”

MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM.

PASSING along one or two of the narrow back streets of the town, Darcy and his companion soon emerged into the open country ; and, after walking about a quarter of a mile further, came in front of a solitary, bare, and formal brick building, separated from the highway by an open fence, inclosing a few yards of coarse and rank turf.

“ Here we are, sir,” said Robinson, opening

the gate to admit his companion. "The house is a very old one, and not in the best repair; but it is weather-tight, I believe," he added, as he knocked at the door: "it does n't want caulking, as you say at sea."

The summons not being heeded, the old man knocked again more loudly, and apologised to his guest for the delay, by saying that he feared his old woman had fallen asleep.

"Why," said Darcy, "you told me, she was gone to Dover, to see her daughter."

"That was my wife. She in-doors is a poor old silly creatur as cleans the place, and waits upon us."

He had no sooner spoken than the door was opened. "Why, Margery," said Robinson, "I thought you did n't mean to let me in to-night. It's rough weather to keep one at the door."

"You said you was n't coming home again to-night," replied the woman, casting a surprised and inquisitive glance at Darcy; "and so," she continued, "I was just going to bed."

“ Well, well, you sha’ n’t be kept up long,” rejoined Robinson. “ I’m going into the town again directly, and so you must just change the sheets, and let this young gemman sleep in my bed for to-night.”

“ In *your* bed !” echoed the old woman.

“ Yes, to be sure. Is n’t it the best in the house ?”

“ Very well, Mr. Robinson ; only you know there’s ———”

“ Do what I tells you, and say no more about it,” interposed Robinson. “ And d’ye hear, as the young gemman’s clothes are rather wet, just put a light to the fire (it’s all ready laid), and then he can sit down, while you are getting the sheets ready. Good night, sir,” he added to Darcy. “ I leave you in Margery’s hands. Good night.”

Darcy was beginning to think the whole affair wore rather a strange aspect, when the woman scattered his cogitations by bidding him follow her.

They ascended a wide, old-fashioned stair-

case, and soon entered the room destined for his reception. The little light afforded by the rush candle in the crone's hand was scarcely strong enough to display the extent of the apartment, which, in this imperfect view, looked bare and gloomy.

Darcy did not much like the appearance of things, but there were many reasons to forbid retreat. Where else should he get a bed? If he left his present shelter, he must go back to the surly landlord, and what would Boniface think? He should most probably meet Robinson again, and what would *he* think? Then, if the story got abroad, that he had been frightened by a lonely house and an old woman, what would *his messmates* think? But, above all, what would the young and pretty servant-girl at "The Lord Howe" think, who paid him so many compliments as a brave gentleman, and a naval officer?

No, no: he felt he must stay where he was, happen what might.

Old Margery had now lighted the fire, which being composed chiefly of wood, soon burned brightly, and cast a glow over the apartment which enabled Darcy to examine it more fully. It contained three uncurtained windows. The furniture consisted of a couple of old-fashioned, unwieldy chairs, with high backs ; a deal table ; two or three sea-chests ; an antiquated four-post bedstead, with formal, faded, stuff hangings. Nothing else was in the chamber : there was no chest of drawers, nor even a wash-hand stand. The comfortless air resulting from this paucity of furniture, was not a little increased by the capacious dimensions of the apartment.

Having made the bed, and seen that all was as comfortable as the nature of things admitted, the old woman, depositing the candle on the table, dropped a curtsey to Darcy, and left him to himself. He listened attentively to her footsteps, as, in a sort of heavy limp, she descended the stairs ; and his ear (so at least it

seemed to him) traced her progress to the front door, and even to the outer gate.

“What!” thought Darcy, “is the old lady gone? And am I to be the only inhabitant to-night of this crazy tenement? A pleasant berth I have of it! A haunted house, too. It’s all vastly agreeable, I must confess. I suppose I’m on the brink of an adventure. Well, it’s better, after all, than reefing taup-sels on a squally night; only I wish Fuller was with me. Two midshipmen are a match for the devil himself; but, however, ghosts or no ghosts, here’s turn in, for I am excessively tired.”

The young man soon divested himself of his apparel, and took possession of the bed, which, contrary to the general appearance of the room, was comfortable enough. But, in spite of fatigue, sleep did not seem disposed to come near Darcy. Though a positive sceptic in all matters of alleged supernatural agency, he began to feel a little excited by his peculiar situation, not to men-

tion the hints dropped by the girl at the ale-house. Every part of his frame seemed restless. His mind, too, became painfully alert, and conjured up many disagreeable apprehensions, and not a few of the most painful recollections of his life. Had he suffered himself to be entrapped into a den of thieves? This was not very likely; inasmuch as it was notorious, that midshipmen were not often overburthened with cash. Was he to be made the victim of some practical hoax? There might be something in this; and if so, he resolved to inflict the mark of his dirk on any one who should be mischievous enough to attempt to annoy him.

From ruminations such as these, his thoughts reverted to his mother; to the misfortunes of her early life, which she had often narrated to him; to her ill-assorted union with Waddy; and, above all, to the assassination of his father.

Meanwhile the gloom of the forlorn-looking room deepened more and more: the wood fire,

which at first blazed cheerily enough, had now dropped into mere embers, whose gleam scarcely penetrated beyond the hearth : the flame of the rush-light was faint and flickering ; and the deep silence, which surrounded the place, broken only by the ceaseless pattering of the rain against the windows, instead of lulling the imagination, kept it in a state of constant suspicion and expectation.

How long Darcy remained in this state of watchfulness, he knew not ; but on a sudden, while he was brooding over the sanguinary atrocity perpetrated on his father, he heard low, heavy, measured footsteps ascending the stairs. He listened anxiously ; and, if the truth may be confessed, with a throbbing heart. The steps approached his room ; the latch was lifted ; the door turned slowly on its hinges ; and a figure, in an old fashioned costume, stalked towards the bed, drew back the curtains, and extending his arms affectionately over Darcy, uttered the word “ France ! ” The young man looked up at the face of the apparition, and saw that it

bore a serene expression ; but as he gazed, the phantom turned away, as if to depart, once more ejaculating “ France ! ”

If Darcy felt the excitement of fear, that of curiosity was still stronger. He suddenly resolved that the spectre should not quit the room without being questioned, and accordingly he darted forth his hand to seize it. This action, like the stroke of a magician’s wand, brought a new scene to view.—Darcy gazed around him ; the door was closed, and the room was bathed in the strong light of day.

A moment’s reflection served to convince the young man that he had unconsciously fallen asleep, while thinking of his father’s fate, and so continued till broad morning—that his ghostly intruder was nothing more than the fruit of a vivid dream. On looking at his watch, and finding the hour to be nine, he sprung out of bed, put on his clothes, and prepared to sally forth in search of breakfast.

But he could not shake from his mind the vision of his dream.

Just as he was about to leave the house, he was encountered, as he descended the stairs, by his landlord, who said,—

“Why surely you do n’t mean to go without breakfast, sir? Nobody never slept in my house and left it without a morning’s meal. Hope you had a good night?”

“Why, not exactly,” returned Darcy. “Do you know, my friend, that queer stories are afloat about your residence?”

“What, *you’ve* heard ’em, have you? Lord love you! they belonged to the place long afore I took it. Nothing like a ghost for bringing down house-rent. Now, let me ax you just one simple question:—do you suppose I could live in such a big roomy place as this, if it had n’t got a bad name? But, however, I hope nothing did n’t molest you in the night. At any rate you’ve had a good long snooze of it.”

“Why, don’t you know,” replied Darcy, “that when one has not slept well during the night, one is apt to make up the lee-way after dawn?”

“To be sure; but come, tell me what it was that kept you awake. Did you hear any *noise*?” added Robinson, with an expression of anxiety.

“None; all was unusually quiet.”

“Then a fig for the ghosts,” said Robinson, slapping his thigh.

Being pressed to declare what had made him so sleepless, Darcy described his dream, and concluded by saying, that he could not get the appearance of the phantom out of his mind’s eye, neither could he free his ears from the sound of the word “France!” which was uttered with such emphatic distinctness.

“Well,” said Robinson, “that’s queer enough. I hope you’re not gulling me about France and the ghost. I can take a hint as well as most folks; though, mind ye, don’t go

too far. I've served you when another wou'd n't, and therefore I looks for something better nor treachery in return."

"Treachery! What does the man mean? I comprehend you not," said Darcy, pointedly.

"Mayhap not; better ye shou'd n't. Come, come along, sir, breakfast is ready in the parlour."

As they were seated at table, Robinson said to his guest,

"Now, I look at ye, sir, by daylight, you reminds me much of a gemman as I carries, about eighteen years ago, aboard a wessel bound for New York. I shall never forget him; he seemed in terrible trouble, and in a dreadful hurry to catch hold o' the ship. The wessel sailed from Lunnun without him, but was to wait at Gravesend for orders. I never in all my born days see two people so much alike as you and that gemman."

"What was his name?" inquired Darcy.

"I never could find it out," replied Robinson. "I was a pilot in those days, sir; but

I've altered my line o' life a little. It's a troublesome trade, a river pilot. You've always to answer for any little mischief as may be done to a craft in backing and filling up and down with the tide. I remember once getting a precious badgering in a matter of this kind from a little crooked-eyed lawyer in the Court of Common Pleas, though the Court did n't *please* me much. I then went by the name of Jolly Jem, but here they claps a handle to name. I'm now never called nothing but *Mister* Robinson."

The mention of the Court of Common Pleas, and, above all, of the "crooked eyes" of the cross-examining lawyer, excited a suspicion in Darcy's mind, that his late very affectionate and respected step-father was the person alluded to. He accordingly asked if Robinson recollected the barrister's name.

"To be sure, I does," replied the quondam pilot, "'twas Waddy; and a more sneaking lubberly, saucy son of a ——"

Though the rising invective would have been

music to Darcy's ears, so much did he sympathise with Mr. Robinson's view of Waddy's character, still the young man had too much good taste to listen to it, though his relationship to the subject could not be suspected. He therefore cut short the stream of Jolly Jem's eloquence, by consulting him as to a conveyance for Dover.

Being informed that a coach would start in half an hour, the young midshipman thanked his host for his hospitality, bade him adieu, repaired to the town, engaged a place outside "the Highflyer," and was soon in possession of half the coach-box.

As the well-fed steeds rattled along, he and coachee got upon familiar terms, and in the course of conversation, Darcy mentioned that he had slept the preceding night in a haunted house.

"Whereabouts might that have been?" inquired the coachman.

Darcy described the locality, and mentioned Robinson's name.

“ A haunted house ! Haunted, indeed ! Plenty o’ *spirits* there ; do you twig ? ”

“ What, then, you mean to say that my host is a smuggler ? ”

“ To be sure I do. But how came *you* there, sir ? They don’t much like your cloth,” he added, glancing at the young officer’s uniform.

Darcy having narrated his adventure at the inn, the coachman explained the matter, by saying :

“ I ’m not surprised at what you tell me. They had a *run* last night, and in course they wanted you to *walk*. But it was a bold step in Robinson to shut you up in his house. I ’m glad you got out of it in a safe skin,” he added, pulling up, and throwing the reins out of his hands as they arrived at Dover.

Darcy was delighted to meet his mother, but he could not shake off the impression of his dream.

CHAPTER XIX.

“ Becalm’d like a log, a target we lay,
Till we takes to the steel, and settles the fray.”

GALLEY SONG.

HAVING spent a few days with his mother, and assisted her in certain arrangements relative to her property, which had now fallen into her uncontrolled possession, Darcy returned to his ship. He had no duties of condolence to perform as regarded his mother’s bereavement. It would have been affectation in either party to exhibit much emotion on

the death of Waddy, and nothing could be more incompatible than affectation and Darcy's mother.

The youth's leave being limited, he was compelled to return to Portsmouth without delay. On the afternoon when he joined the ship, he happened to be in the ward-room communicating the result of his journey to his friend, the chaplain, when Leatherlungs, with a folded letter in his hand, thus exclaimed :

“Hear the news? *Some-of-us* are done—regularly diddled. Unshipped for the borough. True bill:—beat by a majority of twenty-seven. Here it is—have it from his own hand. Well! it 's an ill wind that blows nobody good.—Bet a quarterly * the ship 's now ordered foreign for a freight.”

With the exception of Sir Montague's “followers,” who had been unwilling to comprehend the first lieutenant's terseness, the officers of the ward-room were all delighted to learn that a

* Quarterly pay.

General Election had deprived the baronet of the privilege of napping in the Senate. All agreed that there was an end to Channel-groping; and that the ex-senator's loss of seat would be followed by either a profitable freight for himself, or a pleasurable cruise for the ship. Nor were these predictions at fault. At this period, a new governor was appointed to Gibraltar, and through the unceasing importunity of Lady Puffington in a certain quarter, the Nonsuch was selected to carry out his Excellency and suite.

For three weeks the ship had been detained at Spithead preparing for the Governor's reception. The people had been paid; and as such untoward occurrences do sometimes succeed pay day on board a vessel of war, the topman Long brought aft upon the quarter-deck the gunner's yeoman Fitzgerald, accusing the latter of having 'lightened his bag,' as Long phrased it, 'of a two-pound bran-new Abraham Newland.'

“What have you to say for yourself, Mr. Fitzgerald?” said Sir Montagu, addressing the accused.

“I say, sir,” returned Fitzgerald, in accents of deep indignation, “it’s an infamous and scandalous libel, to charge any honest man with so foul an offence.”

“Oh! ho! you are goil to lay dowl the law, are you? Why, Mr. Leatherluls, this fellow is a regular sea-lawyer.”

The first lieutenant made no reply.

“Ye may ’pend on it, Sir Montagu,” said Long, “there’s never another man in the mess as would have gutted the bag but himself.”

“It’s a lie! an infernal lie,” ejaculated Fitzgerald.

“Mr. Leatherluls, put this Irish ruffial both legs in irols, and let a canvas badge with “THIEF” painted on it with large letters, be stitched on the back of the fellow’s jacket. I only wish I could bring it home to him—he should rul the gaultlet.”

“Thry me, Captain, by a Coort Martial if ye plaise, and let me clear meself.”

“I’ll do lo such thil’, sir. A pretty thil’, ildeed, to detail the ship for a court martial ol *you*, when the goverlor embarks to-morrow. Away with him, master-at-arms—clap him both legs il irols.”

“It’s cruel traitment, so it is,” muttered Fitzgerald, retiring under charge of the master-at-arms.

Long was again interrogated, and every man of his mess attested circumstances which carried with them a strong presumption of Fitzgerald’s guilt. But the note had not been found. And, though on the following noon Fitzgerald had been released from irons, and desired to return to his duty in the store-room, still was he doomed to carry upon his back the damning word.

The governor had now embarked; and on the following noon the Nonsuch was seen spanking down Channel with a flowing sheet

and gusty gale. The ship made a rapid "run." On the fifth afternoon succeeding his departure from Portsmouth, his Excellency was favoured with a distant view of the Rock. The governor, on deck, was straining his eyes to discern 'O'Hara's Folly;'^{*} but he was first destined to have his eyes opened to a folly he had little looked for. The wind had been failing fast, and from Sir Montague's disregard, or rather perverse opposition to the prudent suggestions of the master, the ship on the following dawn was found verging the entrance of the Straits, and entrapped in a treacherous calm.

The morning watch had passed apace. The forenoon had already commenced. Not a cloud hung in the "roof of heaven," nor was a breeze stirring aloft. The sun shone with dazzling splendour. Its scorching rays had

^{*} A monumental heap of rubbish, erected by General O'Hara on the summit of Gibraltar Rock.

rendered the day, early as it was, oppressively hot. Tar was seen to drip from every rope, and pitch to drain from every seam.

“What a magnificent scene!” exclaimed the chaplain, glancing at the broad lights and the deep gigantic shadows which diversified the different heights and cavities of the European coast. “How strikingly picturesque is that lofty and extensive chain of blue-tinted mountains! What aerial perspective! What a truly Italian sky. How warm the glow!”

“Warm, indeed,” interrupted Leatherlungs: “you’ll have something, parson, warmer to look at before long. I know those fellows of old. It’s nuts to them to catch a craft in a start calm.”

The parson now descended the poop, leaving the first lieutenant and master abaft.

The ship lay an unmanageable log rising and falling on the undulating deep, which, from the reflection of the azure vault overhead, partook of the brightest blue. The spars aloft, bulkheads below, and creaking guns, were tiring

the ear with monotonous noise; whilst the 'whole top-sails,' and taunt to' gallant sails, were flapping with furious force by the oscillating motion of the ship.

"By the Immaculate Man! master, here are seven thundering gun-boats fast pulling up on our starboard quarter," ejaculated Leatherlungs, looking through his long glass over the hammock-netting of the poop.

Muddle's Dollond soon confirmed the statement of the first lieutenant, who had already entered the cabin, to report to his superior the *gratifying* news.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the astounded baronet, turning to his excellency, "this is rather ulpleasalt tidils, goverlor. Lot exactly prepared for this. What had we better do, Mr. Leatherluls?" added Sir Montague, who was never known to ask or follow an inferior's advice except when compelled in moments of pressing emergency.

"Beat to quarters to be sure, sir, and pepper the vagabonds, if they'll allow us to bring

a gun to bear on 'em ; but I know these Long-Tom-Turks are very expert in preserving the point of impunity."

" Well ; come Mr. Leatherluls, beat to quarters. You 'll excuse me, goverlor ; you cal stay in the after cabil 'till the ship 's clear for actiol ; ald thel I must consile you to the care of Doctor Dulalley, in the cock-pit."

" With your permission, Sir Montague, I'll remain on the quarter-deck until necessity *compels* me to visit the doctor below."

The rattle of the drum beating to quarters had already thrown the crew of the Little Liner into the most noisy state of excitement. All was confusion. The stools and tables pertaining to the messes on the lower-deck were hove heedlessly down the several hatchways leading to the orlop. Ready-made mechanics were showing their dexterity in knocking down the bulkheads belonging to the officers " cribs " in the ward-room, as well as those pertaining to the transom-cabins on the lower-deck. Maul might be seen alternately suspending the fire

screens to the several hatchways on the different decks — superintending the rigging of the pumps—placing shot plugs in the different wings between wind and water, whilst the captains of the guns, in search of their respective powder-horns, were coming in collision and tumbling over powder-boys in their giddy flight for their respective boxes. Here the eye caught the Herculean boarder, wielding with one hand his naked cutlass, whilst the other was trailing along the deck the lengthy staff of his rusty pike.

Amid the confusion of clearing for action, an accident befel Dunannee, which, with the exception of Bung and his gulled patron, was hailed by all aboard as a fortuitous occurrence,—inasmuch as it precluded the possibility of his rough and unskilful hand inflicting further mischief on those who might be in need of surgical aid. In his nervous hurry to descend the cock-pit, not seeing that the two ladders on the main and lower decks leading to the orlop were

already removed, for the purpose of facilitating the pass of powder from the after magazine, the M. D. was headlong precipitated into the lower regions, fracturing by his fall two of his ribs, and receiving an internal hurt, from which it was his fate never to recover.

A couple of two-and-thirty pounders had been already transported and placed in the stern-ports of the lower-deck; and out of the wardroom windows Toms had pointed the two after eighteen pounders which pertained to his quarters abaft; but the ex-senator's "state-room" was not to be disturbed. Sir Montague had no idea of converting his after cabin into a two-gun battery.

The people were now all at their respective quarters. The guns on the upper and lower decks were run out, and trained as far aft as the cells of the ports would possibly admit.

As the first lieutenant had predicted, the

enemy's gun boats, approaching in two divisions, had taken up a position on the star-board quarter of the ship, a position which had precluded the possibility of the Nonsuch bringing aught of her artillery to bear. In vain were her guns opened on the closing boats, for the shot from the ship fell short and wide of their object, whilst the enemy's long-winded whistlers were wending their way through the Little Liner's becalmed canvas.

Correcting his range, and depressing his fire, the enemy's shot had already hulled the ship in various directions abaft. In the gun-room, two blue jackets and the stammering marine already known to the reader, were mortally wounded, whilst a four-and-twenty pounder had entered the counter between wind and water.

"Where's Mr. Maul?" cried the first lieutenant.

"Here am *I*, sir," said the carpenter, handing upon the poop a ballast-basket, containing

tools and a couple of shot-plugs, composed of tallow and oakum.

“ Can you manage to stop that shot-hole, Mr. Maul ? ”

“ Can ’t say, sir.”

“ Do you mean to try ? ”

“ Must do more than try.”

“ Well ; come—do your best.”

“ May be, my worst, sir.”

And so saying, and seating himself in the bight of a bowlin’ knot, Maul, together with his basket, was leisurely lowered over the quarter in the face of the enemy’s furious fire. With difficulty the carpenter succeeded in closing up the aperture, which, when accomplished, he coolly sung out,

“ Poop, there ! haul up when ye likes now. They must be d—d good shots if they hits the same hole again.”

At this moment the gaff came tumbling down upon the heads of the royal “ party,” drawn up under the command of Gorge upon

the poop; and the bearing-binnacle on the quarter-deck was shivered to pieces, wounding with a splinter the chaplain slightly in the hand.

“Mr. Lawrelce,” said Sir Montague, in any thing but a sympathising tone, “you’ve lo business here; this is lot your statiol, sir.”

“So it seems, sir,” said Laurence, twining his white handkerchief round the bleeding wound.

“Good gracious, Mr. Leatherluls, they’ll lock the ship to pieces!” exclaimed the baronet, perceiving that another winged messenger of fate had demolished the bits upon the quarter-deck. “Good heavens! cal’t we get a silgle gul to bear ol these cursed scouldrels. What *is* Mr. Toms about il the ward-room; ald what cal Mr. Giles be doil’ ol the lower-deck? Lot a silgle shot is goil’ il the right directiol.”

“It’s no use, sir, throwing away shot, firing at these *practitioners*. By the Immaculate

Man! if we don't hoist the boats out, they'll sink the ship. Only give me the boats, and I'll soon turn the tables."

"Well, out with them, Mr. Leatherlungs. Cease firil'. Halds, out boats!"

The boats were hoisted out, manned, and armed, and were now seen with oars tossed up on the off side on which the enemy had brought his artillery to bear. Leatherlungs had already placed himself in the stern sheets of the barge, Toms in the pinnace, Darcy in the yawl, Leagur in the launch; and the assistant surgeon, in the first cutter, was to follow in the rear.

"Now, silence alongside," vociferated the first lieutenant. "Listen with attention. Let every man clearly understand me."

Silence being obtained, Leatherlungs thus proceeded. "Now, mind, men, there must be no straggling. We shall pull in two lines, and all within hail. We shall first attack the nearest vessel: the barge and pinnace will board on the starboard-quarter; the launch

and yawl on the larboard. And bear in mind," he added, with marked emphasis, "there is only *one* way of closing your craft, and that is by running the boats directly *under* the sweeps."

"That 's the chap as knows his work well," said Potter, in an under tone. "Hear that, Mr. Darcy?"

"I hear," returned the attentive mid; "and I see the necessity of following such excellent precaution. Few would have thought of it."

"Now, are you all ready? Have ye all laniards to your boat-hooks?" inquired the first lieutenant.

Nothing of the sort had been prepared. In a few minutes a coil of inch rope was cut up into five-fathom lengths, which were thrown to the bowman of each boat to attach to his boat-hook.

"Now, then, three cheers, and shove off."

The welkin rang with the hearty hurrahs of the Little Liners.

"What a fine fellow is that first lieutenant

of yours, Sir Montague," observed his excellency, looking over the side of the ship.

"Yes, pretty well as first lieutelalts go," returned the baronet, leaving the governor abruptly.

"I say, Paul," cried Long, the bowman of the yawl, addressing the coxswain, seated in his box abaft—"I say, Paul, now's yer time to keep the combs and write to Bet—what say ye, my son, eh? In course ye'll *now* shew 'em what a dying man can do. Three cheers for the bago, boes."

"There ye has me, Bob," returned Potter; "but, bago or no bago, I'm blest if I does n't bend my back, and shew *some* on ye the way to work with a will;" adding, under his breath, "I wishes, Mr. Darcy, we'd only Mr. Lawrence along wi' us. I'm blow'd if he would n't single-handed clear a craft of a hundred of them copper-coloured Turks."

"Ah! poor fellow," said Darcy, "he has already received an ugly hit on the hand."

"What, Mr. Lawrence, sir?"

“ Yes.”

“ I ’m blest if I would n’t myself sooner ’ave got a hit in the head : I ’m *blest* if I would n’t. Hurrah, my lads ! Strike out, my sons ! Bawlin’ Bill for ever ! He’s the bo. He’s the chap as knows his work.”

Pulling out of the line of fire to which the ship was still exposed, the four attacking boats, followed by the cutter in reserve, shaped a course which indicated an intention to board the enemy on the bow. But this was only a *ruse de guerre*. Leatherlungs was too prudent a seaman to run the risk of bringing his boats head and stern with a vessel retaining her way through the water. The feint had, however, the desired effect. The enemy throwing all his men forward to repel the boarders, Leatherlungs backing his boat short round, succeeded, with the exception of the launch, in getting them under the enemy’s sweeps, and eventually boarding the vessel on both quarters.

The first lieutenant was the first to board,

and first to fall. Toms, on the opposite quarter, was followed in quick succession by the scrambling crew pertaining to the yawl and pinnace. The Spaniards sallied aft to repel the boarders, but the assailants made a steady stand, until Leagur, with the launchers, throwing themselves over the vessel's stern, came to their timely aid.

A swarthy, bare-armed, muscular Moor, now advancing with a handspike, made a desperate blow at Darcy's head, which, however, was fortunately averted by the timely intervention of Potter's powerful arm.

"There, take *that*, you blood-thirsty beggar!" ejaculated the tall topman, cutting down the Moor with his broad cutlass. "Take that, you thundering Turk, and larn for the futur to fight with properer tools."

Again were the enemy driven forward, and again they failed in a sally aft. All effort was fruitless. Leagur's fresh hands turned the scale. And now were heard the piteous cries of the Spaniards calling for quarter.

At this juncture Darcy perceived a second vessel approaching, with a manifest intention to rescue the captured boat.

“Look at that fellow, Mr. Toms,” ejaculated the gallant youth. “Do, sir, give me the barge and pinnace.”

“Leagur,” interrupted the lieutenant, turning to the officer of the launch, “remain here with your crew—secure the prisoners—call the cutter alongside—place in her poor Mr. Leatherlungs and the rest of the wounded, and desire Mr. Smith to return to the ship with all possible speed.”

“We may want him, sir,” returned Darcy.

“True. Well, at all events, tell him to do his best for the wounded. And now, Darcy, you follow me in the yawl. Yawlers, pinnacemen, and bargemen, away,” cried the excited lieutenant. “Quick, boys, jump in your boats: no time’s to be lost,” he added, throwing himself, sabre in hand, into the stern sheets of the pinnace.

Shoving off from the captured vessel, the

three boats in a few minutes were seen to board the second vessel in a manner similar to that in which the first had been assailed. The crews of the barge and pinnace had had their complements decreased by six; for six fine fellows had been left bleeding with their gallant leader. But the deficiency was now supplied by increase of valour. Darcy threw himself in advance of his men; but Potter begged the young gemman to back astarn till he made a bit of a lane.

“Slash away, boes,” ejaculated Paul, mowing the enemy down with his ‘cut and thrust,’ already deeply stained to the hilt with gore. “I told ye, I’d show some on ye the way to work. Dash my wig! Mr. Toms is down!”

Toms was, indeed, down. The poor lieutenant had received a sabre blow, which had nearly severed his skull; but he still breathed, and Darcy had him drawn aside.

“Another rally, my boes, and she’s all our own,” cried Potter, heading another charge. “Cheer up, my sons—that’s you. Slash away,

my brave Britons ; we'll larn the lubberly beggars what it is to blister a battle-ship in a start calm."

At this juncture the ship's head was seen in the direction of the boats, and the Nonsuch, now under light and lofty sail, appeared to feel the influence of a gentle breeze which was darkening the surface of the western waters.

" Hurrah, my sons ! *Here* she comes ; down on the top on 'em all. See, there's three on 'em turned tail already. Now, Mr. Darcy, she's all yer own. I told ye, you could n't do better nor come with *me* in the yawl."

Potter's joyous loquacity was now succeeded by mute pleasure at seeing the commodore of the Spanish boats sullenly present his sabre to a lad, who had wielded a sword long before he had handled a razor.

The cutter had already received Leatherungs and his wounded companions. Hardly had he been placed in the stern-sheets of the

boat, ere, opening his eyes, he exclaimed, "Ah, Smith, is that you? These fellows have given me a terrible thump here," placing his hand on his bleeding brow.

"We'll soon set this to rights," replied the assistant surgeon, wrapping a bandage round his patient's head.

"Thank you, Smith; I know I am safe in *your* hands; but for heaven's sake let Mr. Dunanney give me a wide berth. Where's Toms?"

"He, I understand, remains wounded in the other captured vessel."

"Perhaps he may need your assistance more than I do; if so, leave me, and go to his aid."

Smith would not, at such a moment, distress the first lieutenant by informing him that poor Toms had breathed his last; but replied evasively, that he was not in need of prompt assistance.

"And where's Darcy?" faintly articulated Leatherlungs.

“ He ’s keeping, he says, the Spanish commodore’s sword in trust for Mr. Leatherlungs.”

“ Fine fellow ! Tell him to keep it himself. There’s the making in that lad of another Nelson. Smith, try and place me in the bottom of the stern sheets ; I can ’t bear to sit erect.”

The boats had now taken the two captured vessels in tow, and soon closed under cover of the ship, which was fast gliding through the water under her fore and main tattered topsails, untouched top-gallant sails, royals, and top-gallant studding-sails.

CHAPTER XX.

“ Revenge is but a frailty incident
To craz’d and sickly minds ; the poor content
Of little souls, unable to surmount
An injury, too weak to bear affront.”

OLDHAM.

IN a few hours after this affair with the enemy, the *Nonsuch*, not a little damaged in her hull, had, together with the captured gun-boats, taken up her anchorage in Gibraltar bay. The severely wounded were sent ashore to the hospital ; but *Leatherlungs* preferred to remain under the medical care of his friend *Smith*. In due time the governor was landed under the usual salute ; and the gallant lieute-

nant Toms was buried with the honours due to his rank and valour, for he was followed to the grave by the whole of the garrison.

The reader is already aware, that in point of order and discipline, the Nonsuch, even under the most favourable circumstances that might arise, during the command of Sir Montague Mute, could never be considered an efficient man of war. That her discipline had not entirely degenerated into the free-and-easy equality or lawless anarchy of a privateer, was owing to the exertions of her active first lieutenant; but now, deprived of his immediate services from the severity of his wound, and having lost by death the professional ability of his friend Toms, what but utter disorganization could be expected from the tender ministrations of the Gentle Johnny, the captain's favourite follower?

Fitzgerald's punishment had rankled in his bosom, and a spirit of mad revenge had monopolized every faculty. For several days he had maintained a moody silence—remained below

in the store room—refused to take his meals with his messmates—neglected his person—and suffered his beard to grow, giving a haggard appearance to his countenance.

In this state, on the fourth day after the interment of Lieutenant Toms, one of Fitzgerald's messmates, descending into the store-room for the purpose of summoning him to his dinner, perceived him in a stooping attitude trailing something along the deck.

“What are you at there, Phelan?” said his messmate, “why don't you come up to dinner?”

“Dinner! It's the last dinner you or any other man in the ship will ever eat, unless you make the captain instantly come down here and beg my pardon for that infamous badge,” pointing to his doffed jacket. “Do you see that auger, and that hole in the deck?” he added, with the glare of a maniac, “and do you see this candle, and that train? It leads to a hole in the magazine. I give you only three minutes. If the captain does not

come to his senses in that time, up you all go, by the living God !”

Jones was panic-stricken by this terrible announcement, and, gasping out, “Stop, Fitzgerald, I’ll fetch the captain down immediately !” flew up to the quarter deck, where Mr. Gordon, the gunner, and Giles were engaged in conversation.

“Mr. Giles, Mr. Giles !” he exclaimed in a frantic tone, “we shall be all blown up in a couple of minutes, unless the captain goes instantly down to the gunner’s store-room.”

“What’s the man talking about, Mr. Gordon ?” said Giles, as if the gunner could tell.

“There’s Fitzgerald below, sir, in the store-room, as mad as a March-hare,” replied Jones, “holding a naked light in his hand, and with a train of powder at his feet leading to the magazine, swearing he will blow up the ship if the captain does n’t go below and ask his pardon for branding him as a thief. There’s not a moment to be lost. Run, sir, run for the captain, and save the ship and all hands !”

“Good heaven!” exclaimed Giles, “the captain is ashore! What’s to be done, Mr. Gordon?”

The gunner, who was a cool and resolute man, said, “Leave it to me, sir, I can imitate the captain’s method of speaking, and with a wet swab I’ll do the rest.” And he immediately disappeared on his perilous mission.

But, instead of imitating the presence of mind of the gunner, Giles was as completely scared as the terrified messenger who brought the fearful tidings. Both gave way to frantic exclamations, and, running along the lower deck, spread the contagion of fear, causing the ship’s company to crowd the several ladders leading on deck.

Meanwhile the gunner descended the fore cock-pit. The store-room door was closed. Gordon knocked at it, and, imitating the captain’s peculiar pronunciation, cried, “Opel the door.”

“Who’s there?” inquired Fitzgerald from within.

“The captail.”

The door burst back, and Fitzgerald, rushing out with a pistol in his hand, shot the gunner through the heart before his frenzied haste permitted him to discern the features of his victim, which the dim light of the cock-pit rendered the more obscure.

The report of the pistol spread wild consternation throughout the crew, many of whom, in the insanity of their panic, imagining that the first explosion had taken place, jumped overboard out of the lower-deck ports, while those who could not swim took to the boats alongside.

The greater part of the midshipmen shared in the general terror; but Darcy, who felt that nothing was to be gained by the inactivity of despair, rushed down to the fore cock-pit, whence had issued the report of the pistol. Here the first object that met his sight was the gunner stretched bleeding upon the deck. Fitzgerald was bending over the body, holding his candle to the features of the dead man.



G. H. C. Engraver

The Thieves.

With the greatest presence of mind, Darcy instantly threw himself upon the light so as effectually to extinguish it, and then, with equal rapidity, seized Fitzgerald by the collar and dragged him to the foot of the ladder. Here he was soon joined by the mate of the lower-deck, and the culprit was finally secured and consigned to the custody of the master-at-arms.

Whilst Darcy, by his presence of mind and intrepidity, had saved the ship (for Fitzgerald, who, at the moment of the midshipman's arrival, had discovered he had shot the wrong man, would doubtless have returned to the store-room and executed his demoniacal plan), the officers on deck were loudly hailing the men overboard, as they were swimming away in the direction of the two prizes.

Such was the noise and confusion that Leatherlungs was aroused from the cot in his cabin, and, throwing on his dressing-gown, he ascended the quarter-deck, his head still bandaged, when, perceiving the unaccountable state

of things, and concluding the ship was on fire, he called out to the corporal of marines,

“Corporal, you can beat the drum. Beat instantly to quarters.”

This had, in some degree, the effect of restoring order. Fitzgerald, being secured in irons, was soon found to be a confirmed maniac, and was accordingly sent to the hospital at Gibraltar, where, in a few days, he died, uttering the most horrid imprecations against his fancied oppressor, the captain.

The wretched man had hardly been two days under ground before one of his mess-mates, coming aft on the quarter-deck, produced the two-pound note, which had been placed, by some unknown hand, in the corner of one of the shelves where the mess-plates of the berth were usually deposited. A mystery hung over the whole transaction.*

* The main circumstances of this chapter are founded in fact.

CHAPTER XXI.

“ A ship in sight ! with joy the tars make sail,
And spread the bellying canvas to the gale.”

DR. MOORE.

ELEVEN days elapsed ere the damage which the Nonsuch had sustained from the fire of the enemy's gun-boats was sufficiently repaired to render the ship ready for sea-service. Meanwhile, the senior officer off Cadiz, who had purposely put into Gibraltar to replace a sprung lower-yard, had taken upon himself to fill up the vacancies which had occurred in His Majesty's ship, by the la-

mented death of the gallant Toms, and the joyous departure of the "condemned" Doctor, who had been already "invalided home as an incurable subject." The mate of the hold was released from his low and drudging duties between "wind and water." He had now to face the light of day—to look aloft—to wear a trumpet under his arm, and to strut in well brushed attire the weather-side of the quarter-deck, as officer of the watch. In short, Mr. Leagur's gallantry in the launch had obtained for him "an acting order" as lieutenant of the ship; whilst the professional skill displayed by Smith, particularly in the case of Leather-lungs, had procured for the assistant a similar appointment to act as surgeon.

Pursuant to Sir Montague's "Admiralty orders" to cruize for six weeks off the Western Islands after the governor had been landed at Gibraltar, the ship proceeded to sea.

The Little Liner "left Gib," as Darcy termed it, "with a light Levanter," which carried her some seventy miles in her course, when

the easterly breeze, breathing its last, was succeeded by a strong sou'-westerly wind.

The ship was now under close-reefed top-sails and foresail, standing to westward on the larboard tack. The top-gallant yards had been sent down on deck; when about six in the evening, breaking through a dark passing squall, a strange sail was descried, "a point upon the weather bow."

The stranger's "bearing" being reported to the baronet, the main-sail was directed to be set, and another reef to be "let out" of the main-topsail. The Nonsuch was not long in "rising the stranger's hull," which was no sooner discernible from the deck, than she was suddenly seen to alter her course.

"That fellow's a rogue," said Darcy, addressing the officer of the watch, who was now forward on the forecastle. "I'll swear, Mr. Muddle," added the quick-sighted mid, "the brig was going large, and steering to the north-east, when I looked at her last."

"She's now close-hauled, and on the lar-

board tack," returned the master, looking at the stranger through his glass over the breast-hammocks on the forecastle. "Darcy," added he, "down, and tell Mr. Leatherlungs. Let's see what he'll make of her."

The first lieutenant returned with Darcy upon deck.

"Well, Muddle, what do you make of this craft; a Scotch prize, I suppose?"

"I don't know. Her sails look like English canvas; but I can't understand her altering her course."

"I tell you what it is, master," rejoined Leatherlungs, "she's a West Indiaman homeward bound. She's parted her convoy. Her skipper's afraid of getting his hands pressed; and he means to diddle us in the dark. There's no moon, you know, to-night."

"Well, at all events," said the master, "we're overhauling him fast. It looks, however, very greasy to wind'ard. Fear we shan't be able to board him."

The ship's company had been at supper on

the lower deck, and the baronet having risen from his *siesta* in the cabin, now appeared upon the quarter-deck.

“Mr. Muddle,” cried Sir Montague, addressing the officer of the watch, “as sool as the people have had their time, haul the courses up. I dol’t see the use of strailil’ the ship il a useless chase. Aly wol cal see with half al eye that that ’s a British brig.”

“It may be as well, sir,” said Leatherlungs, “now that we ’re coming up with her hand over hand, to pass within hail and speak her.”

“Well thel, keep fast the courses, Mr. Muddle. Hoist the elsigl: she ’ll sool show her colours whel she sees ours.”

“There goes the English ensign,” said Darcy, who had had his eye steadily fixed upon the chase. “Just as Mr. Leatherlungs said,” he added, running aft from the forecastle to report the colours exhibited by the brig.

The sun had already sunk “wild and watery in the west.” The day was fast drawing to a close. From the wind having favoured the

pursuer a couple of points, the chase was now brought within gun-shot, a little upon the lee-bow.

“ Mr. Muddle,” cried the baronet, “ fire a gul at the chase to bril her to.”

“ Ay, ay, sir.” Mr. Lewis hailed the officer of the watch, “ clear away the bow-chaser on the folksel.”

It may be necessary to state, that Mr. Lewis had hardly been borne fifty hours upon the books of His Majesty’s ship, having received an “ acting warrant ” at Gibraltar to supply the place of the deceased Gordon. Lewis, now *Mister*, by virtue of his temporary rank, had been gunner’s mate of the admiral’s ship.

The bow-chaser was already trained in the direction of the chase.

“ Shall I fire low, sir?” asked the acting gunner, hailing from the fore-castle.

“ Lo, sir, lo !” responded the baronet, in hurried accents.

“ Heave up, bo,” said Lewis, addressing the gunner’s mate, who stood by the side of the

gun, handspike in hand, to raise or depress the muzzle of the piece—"heave up, my son, the captain says, 'fire low.'"

The breech of the gun was accordingly raised, and the muzzle depressed, so as to bring the 'line of bore' on a level with the hull of the chase.

"All ready with the gun, sir," cried Lewis, from the forecastle.

"Dol't let him fire 'till *I* tell him. I walt to see where he drops the shot," said Sir Montague, placing himself in the nook of the lee-waist hammock-netting.

"Fire whel you're ready," bawled the baronet.

Bang went the bow-chaser.

"Curse the fellow, he's shot away the brig's mail-boom," exclaimed Sir Montague, scrutinising the vessel with his glass. "Mr. Leather-luls, seld that stupid lubberly mal aft. How the admiral cal put ilto *my* ship such a fellow callil' himself a guller, is to me quite ulaccouttable."

Mr. Lewis now stood uncovered before the baronet.

“How dare you, sir, act il oppositiol to my order. Eh, sir?”

“I axes yer pardon, Sir Montague, but you told me to fire *low*, sir.”

“*I* told you! Was there ever such ef-froltery? I distilctly said, sir, lo, lo. I’ll take good care you shall lever hold a colfirmed warralt. Mr. Leatherluls, lever let this Mr. Lewis fire a gul agail. Away with you, sir; for two pils, I’d seld you to your cabil ulder al arrest.”

The astonished gunner, retiring along the lee gangway, muttered to himself as he walked forward, “I’ll take my bob on the book, he sung out *low*, and twice too,—*that* he did. But it’s always the way, whensomever mischief comes by ’beying orders, the blame’s sure to be thrown on *him* as can bear it least.”

The Nonsuch had now approached the chase sufficiently near to shorten sail, preparatory to passing within hail.

Leatherlungs had taken the executive command. The trumpet was handed over to the first lieutenant, whilst the master proceeded to the poop to conn the ship abeam of the brig.

“Luff,” ejaculated Muddle.

“Luff it is, sir,” responded the quarter-master.

“Give her *more* helm, sir,” rejoined Muddle, peevishly.

“She’s *got* it, sir. There’s never no fear of grazing her quarter,” said Weatherley, who never permitted, if he could possibly help it, a commissioned officer to triumph in the last word.

The main yard had been backed, and the ship now brought-to on the weather beam of the brig.

“Brig, a hoy!” thundered forth the first lieutenant, through the trumpet. “Where are you from?”

“Jam mac.”

“From where? Where did he say, master?” interrogated the hailer.

“ Could n’t make out ; mac was the fag end of the place.”

“ Where—are—you—bound—to,” added Leatherlungs, hailing in the long syllabic mode, peculiar to seafaring folk, when blowing fresh.

“ Lee-vare-pool,” was the trumpeted response.

“ What—are—you—laden—with ?”

“ Rome and shoo-gare.”

“ There’s nothing English in that tongue. By the Immaculate Man ! that fellow’s a reg’lar rogue.”

Leatherlungs had scarcely delivered his opinion ere a boy on board the brig was seen to hold up the log-board, on the back of which was exhibited a communication chalked in large characters.

“ Look, sir !” said Darcy, gazing through his glass, and drawing the attention of the first lieutenant to the writing on the board, “ look, sir ; that boy abaft wants to hold a private parley. What’s that ?” continued he, spelling aloud the large letters chalked in capitals ;—

P. R. I. Z. E— Prize! plain enough. T. O, A, P. R. I. V. A. T. E. E. R. “Prize to a privateer, sir,” ejaculated the delighted youth, to the great glee of the numerous gazers, who had already lined the lee gangway.

“Very ulfortulate it blows so hard. Impossible to board her.”

“*I’ll* board her, sir,” exclaimed Darcy, touching his hat to the captain, “if you’ll only allow me to choose a cutter’s crew.”

“*You* will, will you?” returned the baronet. “Is this braggadocio, Mr. Leatherluls, or is the youlg geltlemal il earlest?” added Sir Montague, in accents which were lost to the middy’s ear.

“No braggadocio there, sir,” responded the first lieutenant; “more of a *doer* than a talker.”

“*I lo*” rejoined the baronet, “he’s a pet midshipmal of yours; but still it wol’t do to expose the lives of others, merely to exhibit Mr. Darcy’s daril’.”

“It won’t do to lose a prize, sir, for want of boarding,” was the pointed response.

“ Well, thel, Mr. Leatherluls,” cried the baronet, who never turned a deaf ear to any observation which involved pecuniary gain, “ let Mr. Darcy select his crew ; and tell him whel he gets aboard to hoist a wheft, if the brig be really a re-capture.”

Darcy was not long in selecting seven volunteers to board the brig. His only difficulty was to refuse, without giving offence the many men who flocked under the half-deck to tender an offer of service. From the throng of assembled volunteers, Darcy selected Weatherley, Potter, Long, Short, and three other similar dare-devils, to complete the cutter's crew.

Pursuant to the plan of the first lieutenant, Darcy and his dauntless volunteers were now lowered in the cutter from the davits on the lee quarter. The boat soon cleared the ship, and flying before the fast following sea, rapidly closed with the brig to leeward : but in running alongside of the stranger, the channels of the vessel, coming in collision with the cutter's side, stove her to pieces. With difficulty could

the crew extricate themselves from the foundering boat, which soon disappeared under the quarter of the brig. The cutter's loss was still unknown to the people in the ship.

In a few minutes a wheft was seen to fly at the peak of the brig. In vain did Darcy endeavour to hail the ship, but his words were borne to leeward on the blast. Not a syllable reached the Little Liner. At length, adopting the plan of the lad who had tried his hand on the log-board, Darcy exhibited, in large letters, the following words:

Re-capture—Seven Frenchmen—Cutter sunk.

“I lew how ’twould be, Mr. Leatherluls, whelever I allow myself to be led away by the opiliol of others thil’s *always* go wrol’. There low, you see, we’ve lost the cutter.”

“And gained a prize,” interrupted the first lieutenant.

“Pray how are we now to exchalge the prisolers?” inquired the baronet, dictatorially.

“They’re man for man, sir,” returned Lea-

therlungs; "and the crew Mr. Darcy has selected could master twenty Frenchmen."

"The wind's fair too, sir," interposed the master. "Mr. Darcy is one of the best navigators in the ship; he's quite competent to carry the brig into port. Reach Plymouth in no time with this staggering breeze."

"Well, could we olly malage to keep compaly to light till it moderates il the morlil', I should take the prisolers out ald seld Mr. Giles il charge as prize-master. *I* always make it a rule to seld a commissioled officer ol those occasiols."

The significant glances which were interchanged between the master and the first lieutenant, at the notion of nominating "Gentle Johnny" to take charge of any craft larger than a jolly-boat, appeared to call forth an observation from the baronet, which was thus answered by Leatherlungs,—

"Perfectly agree with Mr. Muddle, sir. Better let the brig bear up. We can hail Mr.

Darcy, and desire him to secure his prisoners as well as he can, and then shape a course direct for Plymouth."

"You'd better ask him," said the master, "if he has a chart of the Channel aboard."

"Well, if he *is* to go, we'd better get clear of him before dark," said the baronet, withdrawing from the gangway, and retiring to his cabin.

The ship had been again edged away to close with the brig, in order that the hail of Leather-lungs, stentorian as it was, might be distinctly heard. The verbal instructions which were borne on the breeze soon reached Darcy's eager ear, and each anxious interrogation met with a satisfactory response by a telegraphic waive of the hand.

"You may now bear up when you like," vociferated the first lieutenant, through his trumpet; "and bear in mind, Mr. Darcy, you're man for man. Do you *understand*?"

Another waive from the hand of the delighted mid gave clear indication, that the emphatic

words of the first lieutenant carried with them a clear and comprehensive warning.

Ere the shades of night had set in, the Little Liner's re-capture was seen, bowling before the gusty gale, and steering a steady course for Plymouth.

CHAPTER XXII.

“Fair encounter

Of two most rare affections ! Heavens rain grace
On that which breeds between them.”

THE TEMPEST.

It was now nine at night, when Darcy, after consulting with Weatherley touching the disposal of the prisoners, thought it time to ascertain the description of accommodation the cabin of the brig afforded.

“Weatherley,” said he, addressing the quarter-master, who had already taken charge of the first watch, “tell Potter and the rest of the people to remain on deck, until I return from the cabin.”

“I’m awake, sir. If Crappo weathers on Tom, Tom never knows nothin’ o’ natur. Pity, Mr. Darcy, we hav’n’t the bilboes* aboard ; but a few handcuffs would just sarve as well. P’rhaps, sir, you may find a few wristbands below in the cabin.”

“Oh, no, old fellow : recollect prisoners are prisoners. It wo’n’t do to treat them altogether like galley slaves.”

“Sartinly not, sir ; but then you know, Mr. Darcy, Crappo’s a chap as ye can never trust. He’s for all the world like a cat, never can tame him. Fondle and feed him ever so well, still he’s sure to spit at ye, and claw, and scratch ye in retarn.”

During this short dialogue, Mons. Jean Jacques Le Roux, who felt not a little chagrined at being so unceremoniously superseded in the pleasurable and profitable post of prize-master to the good brig *Jane*, was disputing with his

* Irons in which prisoners are confined by the leg.

compatriots upon the folly of having followed their counsel in altering the course.

“Let them jabber away,” said Darcy: “the more they quarrel amongst themselves, the less will they be disposed to brew mischief. So look out, old fellow: I shall not remain long below.”

Descending the companion-ladder, Darcy soon opened the cabin door. But how was he startled at the first object which caught his eye!

“Bless my soul,” said he retreating, “I really have to apologise for this intrusion; but I had not the least idea that ladies were on board,” he added, addressing himself to an elegantly formed female, clad in a white robe, and bending over the “berth” of a helpless and debilitated lady, apparently advanced in years.

“Good heavens!” exclaimed the astonished girl. “Are you an Englishman? Whence do you come? How came you here? Surely that’s an English naval uniform,” she con-

tinued, turning suddenly round, and endeavouring to disengage the lashed candlestick from the table, for the purpose of scrutinizing, with the pale light it put forth, Darcy's dripping attire."

"For this abrupt intrusion," continued the midshipman, "the only apology I can offer is, that the French prize-master had not informed me that the cabin was so possessed."

"Ah! that's like him," ejaculated the reclining sufferer, in feeble accents. "A ruder or coarser minded man never breathed. His vulgar and low-bred familiarities——"

Here the exhausted lady sunk back, unable to give further articulation to her words.

"Say no more, dear mamma. It distresses you to speak. And I'm sure that that rude libertine is unworthy of your thoughts. If poor papa," she added, pointing to her debilitated parent, "could have stirred from that berth, the ruffian dared not have offered——"

"No, my dear," interrupted the voice of an

elderly gentleman, exhibiting, as he drew aside the curtains of his berth, the pallid features of one labouring under the helpless lassitude which always accompanies sea-sickness. "But, Emily, how is this," added the invalid, in accents scarcely audible, "are we still prisoners? or, are we released from that rascal?"

"You are again, sir, restored to liberty," said Darcy, advancing to the berth of the poor gentleman, and grasping him by the hand with energetic sympathy. "The brig, sir," he added, "has been re-captured by a British man of war; and, I'm happy to say, for your sake, is now under *my* charge."

"God is good!" ejaculated the suffering gentleman.

Mutual explanations, touching the relative position of each party, were now interchanged. Darcy's tale was soon told; whilst in return he learned, that the family in possession of the cabin had been kept in total ignorance relative to every particular connected not only with

the chase, but the circumstance of re-capture. Pending the Nonsuch's pursuit of the Jane, the companion hatch had been closely secured, and all communication cut off between the cabin and the deck.

Darcy was further informed that the Jane was a British West Indiaman, homeward bound, having on board the family of Mr. Melton, an affluent Jamaica planter, who was proceeding to England for the restoration of his lady's health; that the brig had parted from her convoy in a dense fog, on the banks of Newfoundland; that Mrs. Melton's female domestic had unfortunately fallen overboard, whilst leaning over the lee rough-tree, on the fifth night succeeding their departure from Jamaica; that the Jane had been captured by a French privateer, and, until now, had been eleven days in possession of the enemy.

Miss Melton had thus far proceeded, when Darcy informed the cabin party, that their rescue from the hands of the enemy was

chiefly attributable to the presence of mind of a Creole lad, who had chalked on the log-board the real state of things.

“And yet,” said Mr. Melton, “I thought it so cruel and unkind of George not coming near me once the whole afternoon.”

“Your valet tells me,” said Darcy, “that he concealed himself in the cabouse until a few seconds before the Nonsuch had hailed the brig. Had he not done so, you might still have been prisoners of war.”

It would seem that, upon her capture, the captain and crew of the *Jane* were all removed to the privateer, and that Mr. Melton and his family were alone allowed to remain in the brig.

Miss Melton had hardly completed the narration of her troubles, ere Monsieur Le Roux unceremoniously entering the cabin, and drawing from his pocket a greasy pack of cards, thus accosted Darcy, with a familiar tap on the shoulder.

“Eh bien donc, Monsieur,—la fortune du

guerre. Soop-pose ve play de cart. Allons, piquet ou écarté?"

"I'll piquet you, you ruffian, if you do not instantly fly upon deck. So, sir, you must be rude to ladies, eh! *You* call yourself a Frenchman?"

"Vat is dis—Vy so get up your cholere?"

"Collar! I'll collar *you* directly. Weatherley," hailed Darcy, "send Potter below."

"Oh! pray, sir," exclaimed Miss Melton, addressing the midshipman, "quarrel not with Monsieur Le Roux on our account. He can now no longer annoy us."

Darcy complied with the request of the young lady, but with the stipulation that Monsieur Le Roux should be expelled the cabin.

Matters were now in a comfortable training. Darcy insisted upon Mr. Melton and his family occupying the entire of the cabin. But the pleasure of taking his meals with the family was solicited by him as a favour.

The wind remained fair for two nights and two days. The breeze had hardly borne the Jane

beyond the latitude of *Bourdeaux*, ere the brig, 'running' under a crowd of canvas, was suddenly taken aback. Fortunately, the snapping of a few studden-sail booms was the only damage the vessel sustained.

"Bad bisness this, Mr. Darcy," exclaimed Weatherley, with a shake of the head. "If this is n't a reglar-built nine-lived nor' easter, Tom never knows nothin' of a breedin' breeze."

"Never mind, old fellow, we must make the best of it," returned Darcy; "though to be sure, beating a bluff-bow'd brig in the Bay of Biscay, is not the pleasantest pastime with *ladies* aboard."

The sincerity with which this remark was delivered, admitted of a very questionable interpretation. Darcy's only apprehension had been, that a fair wind would too soon deprive him of his 'fair freight.'

Although (as we have elsewhere observed) an adverse wind too frequently engenders unfriendly feeling afloat, yet, "when a lady's in the

case," contrary breezes invariably produce contrary effects. The mathematical "saw" of "opposite sides, opposite angles," may be matched by the nautical notch of opposite sides, opposite conduct. The feeling that subsists between "man and man," during the existence of a contrary wind, is the very reverse of that which subsists between people of opposite sexes. So much of fear is to be allayed,—of hope held out,—of fancy indulged,—and of technical explanation poured into the uninitiated ear, that folk are often found to be on terms of the most endearing intimacy, before they are aware of the magnetic influence of nautical communion.

But Miss Melton was not a sufferer at sea. She suffered only from the constant confinement of a close cabin. It was, therefore, determined by her parents that now, no longer subject to the annoyances of the ruffian Le Roux, she should, as often as possible, inhale the purer air of the deck. This injunction delighted the ear of Darcy; for, like most sea-going young gen-

tlemen of his years, Mr. Midshipman Darcy was very susceptible of the tender passion. Indeed, from the first moment he beheld the sylph-like figure of the fair Emily, bending over the berth, and replacing the pillow of her afflicted parent, he was struck by the symmetry of her exquisite form. Nor were the flashes of indignation, and the animated glances which lighted up her expressive features, when narrating her tale of trouble, unperceived by the admiring youth. Before the prize-master was six hours in possession of the Jane, Emily had captured the heart of Charles.

Indeed, in Darcy's eye, (to quote his own emphatic exclamation,) she was a "perfect Divinity." And *certes* the personal charms and fascinating manners of Miss Melton would have made a conquest of even a colder and less amatory mid. But, beauty apart, there were other considerations which, in estimating her worth, rendered her doubly dear to Darcy. The young lady, as he himself had intimated to

Weatherley, "not only had her sea-legs aboard, but was also willing and able to lend a helping hand" in any blue-water work required.

Nine days of the "nine-lived north-easter" had already elapsed, during which period the weather was beautifully bright, and the sea comparatively smooth. Miss Melton was constantly on deck; and under the joint tuition of Darcy, Weatherley, and Co., the young lady had made unprecedented progress in nautical knowledge. The lessons of the naturalist were chiefly confined to disquisitions upon "dog-stoppers," "cats'-paws," "Spanish foxes," and "Fish-falls;" whilst "Turks'-heads," "French-faikes," and "Flemish-eyes" underwent no little 'working' in a watch.

Nor had Darcy been idle in his daily instruction. Emily was soon made to understand the difference that existed between a "granny's" and a "true-lover's knot;" and, in "reefing a reefer's handkerchief," she was not long in acquiring the roundabout way. She had also been taught to "hold the glass,"

and cry "turn" in a nautical tone; and in heaving the log, the "stray-line" seldom led the young lady astray.

Nor was her tuition alone confined to "seamanship." From daily practice in "taking celestial observations," Darcy's pupil readily became an adept in the art,—the preceptor, during each lesson, confining *his* observations to the heavenly object standing by his side. The "Charmer," too, as styled by Weatherley, could "box her compass," and estimate with unerring precision the Jane's "lee-way," whilst weathering on Charles's wake.

Matters nautical and natural were proceeding at a pleasurable pace, when Weatherley, swallowing a "seven-beller," which had been handed up the companion-ladder by Emily, thus accosted the smitten mid :

"I'm blest, Mr. Darcy, if she is n't a nice un. A comelier and cleaner-built craft, *I* never seed : and Tom, too, 's seed a few in his time. What a beautiful swelling bow she's got. How grad'ally from the bends up, she

tumbles home. Never seed better bearin's. Just in the right place. And what top-lights, too! Why, they fairly flashes fire, and flies through a fellow like red-hot shot. Then *what* a takin' tongue, and to feel the coixin' tap of her tiny hand on a fellow's shoulder, as she axes ye 'what ye thinks o' the wind?' Ah! Mr. Darcy, I only wishes *I* was a young gemman."

"Would *I* were an older one," returned the "young gemman."

"Why, yer old enough. There can't be a matter of a month's difference atwixt ye, one way or tother ——"

"Well, but suppose you *were* a young gentleman," interrupted the middy, "what would you do?"

"Give her a bit o' my mind, to be sure," returned Weatherley, with a significant nudge of the elbow. "And, moreover," continued the encomiast, "she's just the sort o' young lady as 'ud like a young fellow all the better for not keepin' his thoughts to himself.

There's natur in every tarn of her. Let her tread the deck, or look aloft, there you has her, natur and nothin' more. And, mind ye, young gemman, ye never seed a thing as natur liked to love, as did n't like to *love* natur."

Darcy would have given all he was worth in the world could Emily only have heard Weatherley's words; but the charmer had returned to the cabin ere the quarter-master had indulged his nat'ral vein.

The soft "sayings" and tender "doings" of the deck were not long lost to the wily Le Roux. His quick perception soon detected Darcy's devotion to Miss Melton. This was exactly what he wished. He perpetually sought, by fulsome innuendoes, touching what he was pleased to term Darcy's "*bonne fortune vid la belle brunette*," to ingratiate himself into the favour of the high-minded youth. But the Frenchman's flattery was not to Darcy's taste. Nor was Weatherley altogether pleased at remarks which were now made in his hearing.

“ If Mr. Darcy,” said he, “ takes a friend’s advice, he’ll tarn ye over to Pleasant Paul. If *he* comes to give ye a nip, good by, Mr. Crappo, to the swallowin’ o’ frogs.”

Le Roux was little disposed to swallow “ the swallowing of frogs.” A war of words ensued: but, in the vernacular of the fore-castle, Weatherley maintained the “ weather gage.”

“ Come, come, Mr. Crappo,” exclaimed the quarter-master, “ we’ve had quite enough of your pie-bald prate. You’d better dive below. Yer sour mug’s only a feeder to a foul wind. Yer never nothin’ but a thund’rin’ Jonas !”

“ No, sare, I vos not de Jean-Ass ; bote it vos *you*, sare, dat vos de veritable *Jean Bull*.”

And, so saying, the discomfited Frenchman descended to the steerage, where he remained in sullen silence the rest of the day.

On the following morning, as Darcy and the Meltons were at breakfast (for both Mr. and Mrs. Melton had for the first time, since their release from the durance of Le

Roux, appeared at table), Weatherley, entering the cabin, exclaimed in joyous accents :

“Here we have it, sir. A sou’wester, at last. Now’s our time! Out reefs,—and crack on every thing low and aloft.”

“Bravo! old fellow,” responded Darcy, rubbing his hands in apparent delight, “crack on her. Come, Mr. Melton, you must now lend a hand to razee this round of beef. A fair wind always creates an appetite. It’s a far better tonic than camomile tea.”

Three thumps of a hand-spike had already summoned the people on deck. Dividing themselves, they flew aloft, and were now seen shaking out the reefs of the topsails, preparing to press sail. Long and Potter ascended forward, whilst Short and the two other topmen distributed themselves on the main top-sail yard. Weatherley alone was left upon the deck, and took the helm in hand.

The English crew had been hardly five minutes aloft, ere Darcy, still at breakfast in the cabin, heard overhead a scuffle upon

deck. Running and peeping up the companion hatch, his eye was scared by a sight he was little prepared to expect. Weatherley, apparently lifeless, lay at the extremity of the tiller, stretched on the deck, whilst his place at the helm was supplied by a ferocious looking Frenchman. Le Roux stood on the weather side of the deck, with a pistol in each hand pointed aloft. Darcy soon saw the state of things. Returning to the cabin, with the rapidity of thought he grasped from the hand of Mr. Melton the carving knife, which the feeble gentleman had just put into requisition.

“ Good Heaven !” exclaimed Emily, seizing Darcy by the arm, “ what’s the matter ?”

“ Detain me not. Our safety’s at stake.”

“ Dear Mr. Darcy, do say what *is* the matter,” ejaculated the alarmed mother, aiding the daughter in her hold of the midshipman’s arm.

“ Let me loose, I beseech you. We are lost, if you detain me another second. Le Roux

and his rascals have already risen," added the midshipman, extricating himself from the ladies' grasp.

Flying up the ladder, Darcy had hardly cleared the companion hatch, ere Le Roux, firing a pistol, sent the ball grazing the crown of his head. Little daunted, he flew forward to grapple his assailant. The Frenchman snapped his second pistol full in the midshipman's face. Darcy, however, succeeded in closing and collaring his tall antagonist; but the knife had fallen from his hand; and in the struggle, the superior strength of Le Roux prevailed. The midshipman fell under the Frenchman, who now kept the youth down upon the deck, with his knee pressed upon his chest.

At this moment, Emily Melton, who stood unseen on the companion-ladder, trembling for Darcy's fate, suddenly descended the cabin, and, without awaiting to exchange words with her parents, seized the tea kettle, poured into a basin the boiling water, ran on deck, and, before the Frenchman had time to perceive her

approach, flung the scalding liquid full into his eyes.

Darcy's opponent fell back in agonizing torture, whilst Miss Melton dropped on the deck, from the effect of a marling-spike, which had been hurled at her head by the ruffian who still retained his hold of the helm. The mischievous missile had hardly taken effect, ere Short, sliding down the main top-mast back-stay, rushed aft to grapple with the steersman.

"Oh, you infernal, white-livered cowardly beggar!" he exclaimed, flying at the Frenchman like a tiger, and seizing him by the bare throat with both hands. "See what you've *done*, you murderin' monster! But you shall never again hurt the hair of woman's head," he added, strangling the helmsman in his herculean grasp, leaving the dastard dead upon the deck, and running to raise the senseless girl, while his companion aloft, arriving at the scene of action, took the tiller in hand.

“God bless her! the blood’s fairly left her cheek. Mr. Darcy! Mr. Darcy!” called Short, who had not been aware that the youth had been compelled to run forward to the aid of Long and Potter, who were in furious combat on the forecastle, opposed to four powerful Frenchmen.

“Is there never no one as can run and get a glass of grog for the young lady? Here, you George,” cried Short, perceiving the Creole lad peeping up the companion ladder; “bear a fist, boy. Bring your young missus up a drop o’ summut to bring her to life.”

Short’s mandate was immediately obeyed. Meanwhile, he placed Miss Melton in a position in which he could more readily fan her with his hat.

“Do, young lady, open yer eyes, and give comfort to a fellow. Oh! what a beggar, to harm such a beautiful cretur. Talk o’ Bet Bowles! D—n it, she can’t hold a candle to she. Do, Miss, do open your precious peep-

ers. God bless her—look, she always does as a fellow tells her.”

At this moment, Emily shewing symptoms of returning life, opened her eyes like one awaking from a dream:

“Where am I? Where am I? Is Mr. Darcy safe?” she faintly uttered, dropping her head upon the shoulder of the tarry topman.

“All right, miss. Here he comes. Here’s a sight as ’ill do your heart good.”

The sight was indeed one calculated to cheer the heart. Potter and Long at this moment were bringing aft by the nape of the neck their two most powerful opponents; having, as Paul phrased it, left the t’ other two cripples to fish their sprung spars on the folksel.

Emily’s position had no sooner caught the eye of Darcy than he flew to her aid. The youth’s feelings were quite overpowered at the sight of the faint, gasping, and, as he thought, dying girl. The danger he had undergone—the unequal struggle he had personally maintained

—the loss which he supposed he had suffered by the apparent death of Weatherley—all gave way to the terror inspired by that one image,—Miss Melton severely wounded. She had again relapsed into an unconscious state; and, as Darcy gazed on her, he could no longer master his emotion, and burst into a flood of tears.

At length she again lifted her head from the shoulder of the seaman who supported her, and, unclosing her eyes, their glance fell on Darcy, who exclaimed,

“She lives! She lives! Speak, dear Miss Melton. Speak! let me hear a word or two from your own lips, and my heart of hearts shall bless you. Speak, speak, for heaven’s sake!”

“I’m better, now,” she replied, extending her hand to Darcy, who seized and pressed it with fond emotion. The pressure was gently returned by Emily, as she added, “but I still feel very faint. I was stunned by the blow, and my head suffers dreadfully. The missile was well aimed.”

“Cowardly villain!” exclaimed Darcy, “he

has met his due reward. But this is not a place for *you*," he continued, addressing Emily. "Let me bear you below."

"No, no," responded Miss Melton; "suffer me to remain where I am. They will not frighten me any more now; for I feel that you will not leave me. The air of the deck, too, is reviving; and I would not, for worlds, let my parents see me thus. I shall soon be more fit to meet them."

Darcy could not find words to express his emotions. His thoughts were evidenced by the adoration beaming in his looks.

At this juncture, Weatherley, who had to all appearance shared the fate of him who had wrested the helm from his hand, was seen to raise his head from the deck.

"Look, Mr. Darcy," exclaimed Short, pointing aft to the moving man. "Look, sir, Natur's got hold o' Tom again. All right now. Wrap full, old fellow. Thyst an' no higher."

Meantime measures touching the custody of the prisoners had been already discussed.

Sundry schemes were devised to prevent their rising again; but in the practicability of each, a vast difference of opinion prevailed. Potter differed with Weatherley, Weatherley with Short, and Darcy with all. At length, the inventive genius of "Long-headed Bob" supplied a plan which was at once adopted.

With the exception of Le Roux, who, by the presence of mind of Miss Melton, had been already rendered *hors de combat*, and who had been borne below to his hammock in the steerage, the five remaining prisoners were secured after the following fashion. The arms of each man were first pinioned behind his back, then he was led to the waist, seated on the deck, and both his legs were securely lashed to the chain cable* attached to the anchor, which was suspended to the starboard bow of the brig.

At the desire of Darcy, in whose character clemency was a prominent feature, the arms of the prisoners were to be released at stated in-

* At this period the chain cable was in *its infancy*.

tervals, for the purpose of permitting them to take their meals. All, however, were given to understand, that the slightest indication to riot, or attempt to release their persons, would be instantly followed by dropping the anchor from the brig's bow. The effect of this nautical "new drop" needed no explanation. It was sufficiently obvious. The fettered Frenchmen all saw, that the anchor suddenly "let go" would cause the chain cable to run rapidly through the hause; that it would as rapidly carry, and drag with it their persons along the deck; when it would lacerate and dislocate their limbs, if not eventually end in violent death.

Purposely to awe the prisoners, one of the watch was placed forward on the forecastle, with an axe in his hand, ready at a moment's warning, to cut the "stoppers" by which the anchor was suspended to the vessel's bow.

But Darcy's difficulties had yet to commence. The third hour of the "middle watch" had been hardly completed—the burial service

read over the body of the deceased, and his remains decently committed to the deep (for Darcy warred not with the dead) ere the Jane, to use Weatherly's words, "tumbled right into the teeth of a French privateer."

It was a dark and starless morn. Lowering clouds hung in the heavens. The horizon to leeward was obscured by a dense interminable bank, black as Erebus. A fresh breeze was blowing from the S.W., of which Darcy was determined to make the most, as, steering a steady course, he pushed his devoted bark under a crowd of canvas 'low and aloft.

Dodging leisurely to leeward under low sail, and hidden from view by her favourable position, the cruiser descried the British brig long before the former became discernible to Darcy's crew. Like a cat watching a mouse, the privateer, with her main-topsail to the mast, remained stationary, until the Jane had approached sufficiently near to permit the

wily Frenchman to carry his purpose into full effect.

A volley of musketry was now discharged at the Jane; but Darcy, undaunted, steadily pursued his course. The cruiser, a long, low, sneaking-looking black brig, with raking masts unusually taunt, now "filled," and bore up, steering, within pistol shot, a course parallel to that of the British brig. The enemy followed up a fierce *fusillade*. The "weather-boards" of the West Indiaman were completely riddled, and her lower masts were already studded with musket balls.

"Keep close down, boys," cried Darcy, cheering up his gallant crew, for the watch below had already jumped upon deck, "and if you love me, Potter," he added, addressing the helmsman, "steer small."

"Leave Paul alone for that. 'Twill take more, Mr. Darcy, nor buzzin' bullets, to make, *me* yaw an inch from my course."

At this juncture, the tacks and sheets per-

taining to the two-top-gallant-sails, lower and fore-topmast-studdin'-sails, were shot away, causing the unrestrained canvas to fly wildly, and flap furiously in the wind.

"There, too, goes the main-taupsle-tye," ejaculated Long, whose watching eyes were turned aloft, as he lay prostrate on the deck, under cover of a cotton bag, stowed upon the brig's quarter. "I'm blest," he continued, "if the beggars wont reg'larly unreeve ev'ry runnin' rope in the craft."

"Let them. *They* may shorten sail if they will. But *we*," said Darcy, in a determined tone, "shall not start a single stitch."

"That's *you*, Mr. Darcy," exclaimed Potter, at the helm. "That's a reg'lar-built bit o' Bawlin' Bill."

The day had already dawned. The privateer had brought a couple of carronades to bear upon the *Jane*. Grape and canister had now cut away two of her after-swifters. Still Darcy "held his own." But for the trembling tenants of the cabin he felt much ;

nor could he at such time desert the deck, or quit his post, even to allay the fears of the ladies below.

But further flight was now hopeless. A round shot entering the Jane's starboard quarter, severed the tiller in Potter's hand, and the brig instantly broached to.

"It's all up, Mr. Darcy," cried Potter.

"Done for at last," echoed Weatherley.

"Mortal man could n't do more," ejaculated Long.

"Would n't mind it," said Short, "if it war n't for the young lady below. Come, Mr. Darcy," he continued, "*we'll* take the canvas off her. The beggars have stopp'd firing. Go, sir, down to the cabin. Ease it off handsomely, you know. No one can break it better."

"Break! It will break her heart," said Darcy, whilst his own was ready to burst. Descending the cabin, he soon acquainted his friends with the disastrous event. The feelings of the Meltons are not to be described.

The privateer's boat soon boarded the brig. The cruiser proved to be *L'Entreprenant*, pertaining to L'Orient. She had made many captures ; and as she was already replete with prisoners, the British mode of securing the enemy was now in return practised upon the " Little Liners."

Poor Darcy ! The sight of English seamen locked by the leg was not to be borne. He therefore prayed to be confined below. His prayer was heard.

In seven-and-thirty hours from parting company with the privateer, the British brig was seen securely moored in the port of L'Orient. Here Le Roux, appearing upon deck with a bandage round his eyes, declaimed, with all a Frenchman's ingenuity, upon the perfidious and cruel treatment he had experienced at the hands of the English. Miss Melton was represented as an amazon !—a fiend !—a female brigand ! (as if brigands would practise their calling afloat). Darcy was stigmatised as a butcher, a charlatan, and a *miserable mauvais*

sujet. The crew were designated as murderers, particularly Short, who had slain the steersman.

These representations to the officer of the port were not without their due effect.

LAND SHARKS

AND

SEA GULLS.

BOOK IV.

THE DISCOVERY.

He who hath never warr'd with misery,
Nor ever tugg'd with fortune and distress,
Hath had no occasion, nor no field to try
The strength and forces of his worthiness.
Those parts of judgment which felicity
Keeps as concealed, affliction must express ;
And only men show their abilities,
And what they are, in their extremities ;
For all the fair examples of renown,
Out of distress and misery are grown.

DANIEL.

BOOK IV.

THE DISCOVERY.

CHAPTER I.

“ Nothing is a misery,
Unless our weakness apprehend it so :
We cannot be more faithful to ourselves
In any thing that 's manly, than to make
Ill fortune as contemptible to us
As it makes us to others.”

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

HAVING been taken before the commandant of the town, and subjected to numerous close, and, as the Meltons conceived, impertinent interrogations, the whole party, as prisoners of war, even including the ladies, were condemned to be escorted by a military guard to the dépôt at

Valenciennes. The men were formed in rank and file with other prisoners, previously captured, while Mrs. Melton and her daughter were permitted to hire a private vehicle, in the front and back of which sat a huge grenadier, by way of countervailing force to the two English ladies, for Miss Emily's gallant exploit on board the *Jane* was not forgotten by the *soi-disant* advocates of *l'hommage aux dames*. The voiture was ordered to keep in rear of the party on foot, and, in this manner, notice having been given, that the first man who should dare to wander from the ranks would be instantly shot, the captives commenced their unhappy march.

They were about three weeks on the road, enduring wretched privations in one place, a little lenity in another, and ingenious torment and insolence in a third. The sulkiness of "pleasant Paul" afforded matter of triumph to the Frenchmen, while the imperturbable good humour of Weatherley, the naturalist, at once surprised and provoked them. Mr.

Melton cast many a "longing, lingering look behind," at the voiture, containing his wife and daughter, who shed tears at their inability to relieve the distress of the good man, as he limped onwards with weary limbs and blistered feet. As for Darcy, his youth and resolution kept him bravely up, but his demeanour was thoughtful; for, though he could not satisfactorily account for it, his dream in the house of Jolly Jem perpetually haunted his mind. He could not help imagining it to be in some manner or other connected with his fate, and to prefigure his captivity in France.

One afternoon, just as the sun was dipping behind a hill (being the close of the fifth day of their harassing march), Weatherley, turning to Potter, said,

"Look here, Paul; if we'd Mr. Muddle with us, now, he'd be axing for an azimuth compass, to take an amplitude. And I'm blest if he wou'd n't be right enough, for I'm sartin, these jabbering chaps never know nothin' o' the right variation."

"Curse the variation," returned Potter, sullenly.

"You may growl, Paul; but you'd growl far more, if you'd to pad the hoof thirty or forty miles further, from keepin' too much of an easterly course. D'ye think as these here thundrin' Johnny Darmeries knows the true bearin' o' the place they're bound for? Blow the bit!"

"They'll find the place," rejoined Potter, "sooner nor suits a feller's feet. My trampers are terribly galled. The sole o' my starboard foot is blistered from clue to earing."

"Never mind, Paul, so you does n't get another touch of the bago. You hav' n't got the parson now to patch you up."

Weatherley's observation as to their route was not so ill-timed as it might at first sight appear, inasmuch as the escort had kept out of the direct course, in order to avoid Paris.

Evening was now fast approaching, when, as the party had just passed through a small town lying in their route, they were met by a body of

the national guard, who were escorting four English seamen from Rochelle to Valenciennes. These men, having escaped on the road, and being retaken, were now handcuffed, a degradation which excited, in no small degree, the wrath of Potter and of his ship-mate Long.

“Dash my wig! can you stand that, Bob?” ejaculated Paul, darting from the ranks, and rushing towards the shackled seamen, with the vain endeavour of releasing them from their manacles. “Do the beggars think,” added Potter, “to treat their betters like a parcel o’ Guinea niggers?”

This movement aroused no little anger among the French guards, who, not being able, in such a confused mass, to carry into effect the order of the commandant, namely, to shoot whoever might leave the ranks, began with the butt-end of their muskets to belabour Paul about the head. The blows he received would have stunned one whose skull was less thick than that of our pleasant friend; but they seemed to have no other effect on him

than to stimulate him to action. He was now in his proper element, and, regardless (or perhaps ignorant) of consequences, he turned upon the soldier nearest to him, and seizing his musket, soon wrenched it from the Frenchman's grasp, crying out,

"Now's your time, Mr. Darcy: now, or never. Here's Bob, an' Slashin' Sam, an' all the rest on us ready to come Trafflygar over the jabberin' frog-eatin' fry."

"*Sacre! vilain!*" exclaimed the French officer, cutting at Paul with his sabre, which the latter parried with the musket, which he wielded not only in defence, but as a trophy.

"Speak English, you beggar!" said Paul. "Who do you think is to understand your outlandish gab? If you can't fight like a man, try and talk like a man."

The mêlée now became hotter and hotter, and more and more confused. Blood was flowing from more than one head on either side. Mr. Melton was aghast, seeing the great disparity between the captives and their

escort; the ladies in the voiture (now left to themselves, for their *body guard* had dismounted from the vehicle to join in the fray) were screaming at the top of their voices, and loss of life must have ensued, had not Darcy commanded Potter to desist.

"I desire," said he, "that you instantly surrender that musket. You know not what mischief your rashness may bring upon us all."

"Come, come, Paul," exclaimed Weatherley, supporting the superior authority, "do as the young gemman bids ye. Mr. Darcy's right enough. Can't kick up a breeze, an' the whole of the country agen us. 'Tis n't in natur. Give 'em back the musket—let 'em have it. *We'll* catch 'em in bluewater yet."

Long and Potter were now separated from their friends, and, having been handcuffed, were joined to the Rochelle *Incorrigibles*.

At length the party of captives, to whom the prospect of a prison was delightful, in comparison with the toil of a long march in an enemy's country, reached Valenciennes. In a

jail they would, at least, be able to rest their jaded limbs ; and it was, therefore, with feelings allied to pleasure, that they entered the gloomy walls of the citadel. The foremast men, and other captives of their class, were consigned to the barracks situated in the north wing ; while a small and miserable house, divided into six rooms, with three or four beds in each, was appropriated to Darcy and other midshipmen, previously taken prisoners, who were denominated *tres mauvais sujets* : a category under which Darcy had been especially brought, by his determined conduct in repressing the attempt of the French prize-master to regain his capture.

So great indeed was the dread inspired by these dare-devil midships, that, on their arrival, the sentinels were doubled, and the strictest vigilance enjoined.

As Mr. Melton was a civilian, he was allowed to be at large in the town, on his parole with his wife and daughter.

On their arrival at Valenciennes, the new

captives were eagerly surrounded by those who had been for some time in confinement, and who were greedy, in proportion to the length of their captivity, to learn the latest news from their native land. Amongst these was an elderly gentleman of the name of Devon, who seemed to be more than usually interested by the countenance of the midshipman of the *Non-such*. So much indeed was he struck by this, that he lost no time in ascertaining his name, which he had no sooner learned, than his emotion, already great, became irrepressible.

On the second morning of his arrival at Valenciennes, as the young officer was pacing moodily in what was termed *the play-ground* of the citadel, Mr. Devon approached him, saying, "Your name, I understand, sir, is Darcy."

"It is, sir," replied the youth.

"May I venture on a liberty," rejoined Mr. Devon, in a faltering voice, "which I own seems unwarrantable in a stranger such as I am, to inquire where your father lives; for I have relations of your name."

"Alas !" returned Darcy, "my father has been dead many years."

"How near I was to happiness !" ejaculated Mr. Devon. "Your face, young man, aroused in me hopes which made my heart too large for my bosom. What you have said has restored me to my miserable self."

Darcy stared.

"But pray tell me to what part of England your family belongs."

"My father was an Irishman," rejoined Darcy.

"From what part of the island?"

"I never learned."

"Where did he die?"

"Alas ! he was assassinated."

"What was the murderer's motive?"

"Your questions," returned the youth, "are somewhat frank and abrupt ; but I will answer them frankly. I believe that my mother is acquainted with the cause of the atrocity, but it was never divulged to me. And now, sir, that I have replied to all your queries, may I

in return beg to know why I am honoured with your curiosity?"

"I cannot answer you in this public yard. Strictly confined, as I understand you are, to the citadel, I may not ask you to my house in the town; for though, like yourself, a captive, I am suffered to be on my parole, under certain limitations. But you can no doubt obtain the use of a room for a short time, and grant me an interview.

An apartment which Darcy occupied with some other midshipmen, was soon cleared, and left exclusively to Mr. Devon and the youth.

"Your age—your name," resumed Mr. Devon, "above all, your face, which shewed me, as in a glass, the features of one more loved than aught the world contains, prompted the inquiries I have made. Your father's fate, though I knew him not, has robbed me of the only happy thought which for years has arisen in my sad heart. My wife! my dear wife! what can have befallen thee and thy child?"

continued Mr. Devon, drawing a miniature from his bosom, and kissing it fervently.

“Captivity, Mr. Devon,” said Darcy, “has its privileges. Already I feel as if I had been long acquainted with you. Do not, therefore, refuse to shew me the portrait which excites in you so strong an emotion.”

Mr. Devon placed the miniature in the hands of the young man, who no sooner glanced at it than he exclaimed, “Good God! how like my mother!”

“My boy! my boy!” gasped Mr. Devon, stretching out his arms; but before he could fold the youth in his embrace, he fell back in a senseless state.

CHAPTER II.

“ Sound moves a sound, voice doth beget a voice,
One echo makes another to rejoice ;
One well-tuned string, set truly to the like,
Struck near at hand, doth make another strike.”

DRAYTON.

It was some time before the sufferer could be restored to consciousness ; and this was no sooner effected, than he burst into violent sobs, clasped the youth in his arms, and again ejaculated, “ My boy ! my boy !”

Darcy allowed the passion of the stranger to work its own way. He felt convinced that Mr. Devon was under a thorough delusion. How could he be his son ? Darcy’s father had

been murdered almost before the eyes of the youth's mother. She had lived some time as a widow—had married again—the gentleman who now claimed the young man as his son bore the name of Devon, not Darcy. These facts forbade any other suspicion than that the stranger was not in his right mind.

Yet, on the other hand, how was Mr. Devon's emotion, on beholding the features of the midshipman, to be accounted for? And, above all, how could a stranger have become possessed of a portrait of Darcy's mother? For, although the picture represented a comparatively young face, the lineaments were so exactly those of Mrs. Waddy—the peculiar expression of the countenance was so strikingly true—the eyes, the mouth, the contour of the chin, the colour of the hair, even the mole on the left cheek, were so identical, that Darcy could not entertain the least doubt as to the original of the portrait.

These latter considerations, however, weighed but little with the midshipman. Had, indeed,

any uncertainty existed as to the fate of his father, he might have felt perplexed at the present claim of paternity, though made by one bearing a different name from his own. But of the death of his parent there could be no doubt; and the young man, therefore, remained rather a cold spectator of Mr. Devon's agitation and transport.

At length, however, the stranger recovered something of composure, and said, "I do not wonder, Mr. Darcy, that the words which have escaped me in my ecstasy should have excited in you no other feeling than that of incredulity. What you have stated as to the assassination of your father, opposed to your instant recognition of the miniature, I must own bewilders me in the extreme. The mystery must be solved. You tell me," continued Mr. Devon, "it was reported that your father was murdered?"

"Reported!" echoed Darcy; "we are but too certain of the fact, which occurred almost in my mother's presence."

The positive tone assumed by the speaker in making this declaration, sounded to the elder captive like the voice of fate; yet he would not altogether abandon hope. Every thing conspired to favour his first belief, except this one idea of the murder of the young man's father, which, if it could be borne out, must, of course, establish the conviction that, notwithstanding the evidence of the miniature and the name and features of the youth, he must belong to a family in no way connected with that assigned to him by his companion.

"What you state, Mr. Darcy," said Mr. Devon, "is indeed most extraordinary. May I inquire where the melancholy event you speak of occurred?"

"Near London."

"The place?"

"Willesden."

"How long ago?"

"When I was a child."

"Enough, enough! A light breaks in upon

me," joyfully exclaimed Mr. Devon. "I tell you your father lives, and is now before you. How inscrutable are the ways of providence! Poor O'Regan! To escape myself, I sent thee to thy death! What became of the assassin?"

"He fled."

"Before I commence the explanation which it is necessary I should give you," said Mr. Devon, "let me ask——"

But the words he meant to utter died on his lips. His resolution failed him. He was about to put a question, on the answer to which depended his all of earthly happiness. At length, after a pause, and while his features grew deadly pale, he gasped out,—

"Is your mother alive?"

"She is."

"Receive my thanks, merciful heaven!" exclaimed the stranger, burying his face in his hands.

Being in a short time recovered from this fresh agitation, Mr. Devon said, "Listen to

me, my dear son ; for so you will permit me to call you, when you shall have heard my story."

"I am breathless with attention," said Darcy.

"It is now about fourteen years ago since I last beheld my dear wife. I left her with her child, one morning, at an old house we had taken in the village of Willesden, that I might meet some political friends in London, promising to return early in the night."

"This," said the youth, "agrees exactly with what has been often told me by my mother. But *your* name is Devon."

"No, no ; that is an assumed designation. My real name is Darcy."

"Go on, go on !" exclaimed the youth, betraying, in his turn, an agitation almost equal to that which had so strongly visited his companion.

"O, what a blessed moment is this !" ejaculated the elder Darcy (for so we must now call him), while he convulsively grasped the hand of his son.

A pause ensued. It would be vain, indeed, to attempt any description of the feelings of either party during that sacred silence.

The first that spoke was the elder Darcy, who said, "You must not, my dear boy, notwithstanding the uniform you wear, think the worse of your father, because he loved his native land, and combined with others against its oppressors."

"What mean you?"

"Your mother, you have already said, has told you your father was an Irishman?"

"Often."

"My country has long laboured under misrule, in the hope of remedying which, an association was formed many years ago, called 'Patriots of Erin.' In this society, I enrolled myself, and became an active member; so active, indeed, and so conspicuous (for believing my cause to be an honourable one, I needlessly exposed myself), that I drew the eyes of the authorities on me. I have told you that I promised my wife to return early in

the evening of the day when I last saw her. You shall now know what prevented me.

“ The meeting, at which I had spoken energetically, was no sooner ended, and I was about to depart, than a countryman of mine, one O'Regan, came up to me in breathless haste, and acquainted me that a warrant was issued for my apprehension on a charge of high treason. I was unconscious of moral guilt ; but I well knew the consequences in which such an accusation would, at that time, involve a man. I trembled for my wife and helpless child. What was to be done? My very life was at stake.

“ In this emergency, the ready tact of poor O'Regan saved me. He told me that there was no security but in instant flight, for which I made a hurried preparation. A moment's reflection, however, convinced me that flight, in my case, would be almost in vain, since doubtless my person and dress had been so circumstantially detailed, as to render escape all but impossible. ‘ Let us change clothes,’ said

O'Regan ; ' our figures are much alike. I have a hackney coach at the door. Quick ! we will go to my lodgings, and I will undertake to metamorphise you in a twinkling.'

" We accordingly repaired to O'Regan's humble apartments in the vicinity of Charing Cross. Here my poor friend arrayed me in his clothes. I shaved off my whiskers, and after commissioning O'Regan, who was now dressed in my suit, to proceed to Willesden, report the existing circumstances to my wife, and, by aid of the society to which I belonged, enable her and her child to follow me, I sallied forth to Wapping, where I hoped to secure a passage in a vessel, which I was informed was on the point of sailing for New York.

" On arriving at Wapping, I learned to my dismay, that the ship had sailed in the morning. On further inquiry, however, it appeared that she was to wait a few hours at Gravesend. Thither I immediately proceeded, and, after much effort, succeeded in getting aboard the

ship, though in this I should have failed, had it not been for the zealous agency of a river-pilot, known by the *sobriquet* of Jolly Jem, for there was so terrific a storm on that night, that no one else would venture to take me off to the ship."

"I saw the very man by the merest chance not long ago," interrupted young Darcy; "he told me this identical circumstance, which he was induced to mention, on observing my strong likeness to the fugitive gentleman."

"The hand of Providence is in all this, my dear son; and your captivity was mercifully ordained to bring you to gladden the heart of your unhappy father, and lead him to his wife."

"My dream too," exclaimed the young man, "is now fulfilled."

"Your dream!" echoed the father, "let me hear it. But, no; not now. I will first finish my recital."

"We had not been at sea a couple of days, when a French privateer bore down upon us, and we soon became an easy capture. Being

taken to the port of St. Malo, I, the other passengers, and crew, were marched to this place, and for some time confined where you are now imprisoned. The tyranny of Bonaparte placed us under the strictest *surveillance*, and I have reason to believe that every letter I endeavoured to send to your dear mother, was wantonly and needlessly intercepted, for no answer ever reached me. I was thus a sufferer under the despotism of two governments, though each was in deadly opposition to the other.

“In this confinement I lived several years, until the short peace of Amiens liberated the English captives. The rigour of my imprisonment, meanwhile, had been so far relaxed as to allow of my living out of the citadel and forming acquaintance with some families in the town. No sooner, however, was I permitted to leave France, than I flew, without a moment’s pause, on the route to London, in the hope that I might discover my wife, and again clasp her and her child in my arms.

“ I soon reached the English metropolis, and lost no time in commencing an earnest search for those so dear to me. No means were left untried to trace the residence of my wife, but all were vain. I went to Willesden, and made the most minute inquiries there. Alas! no one in that small and secluded place had any recollection of our brief sojourn in the village so long ago. After a second prolonged and fruitless search in the mazes of London, I became convinced that my dear wife had fallen a victim to her despair at my long absence. At length, finding that I was a total stranger in the metropolis, I resolved to return to this town, where, at least, I could obtain some solace for my broken heart in the society of a few friends; and where, also, I could earn a slight subsistence by teaching English.

“ The war, however, was soon renewed, and I became a *detenu*. This mattered little to one who had no motive for returning to his native country; and here I have been permitted, on

my parole, to enjoy nearly as much freedom as the natives themselves.

“ But Fortune, it seems, had yet some bliss in store for me. How foolish and how sinful is despair ! Judge of my astonishment—my rapture on hearing, the other day, the name of Charles Darcy among the English prisoners ! To see you again, my beloved son, is transporting beyond expression. But, if in every delight something of pain is always mixed, how deeply is the pleasure of our meeting embittered by a captivity which keeps us from the sight of your dear mother ! Years may pass before we can meet her again, if indeed, that blessing be ever reserved for us.”

“ We must not abandon hope, dear father ; recollect what you have just said about the folly of despair,” observed the midshipman, with the elastic and unconquerable spirit of youth.

“ True, true !” exclaimed the elder Darcy. “ Yet wherefore did Fate so obstinately pursue me when in England, as to prevent my discovering that my dear wife still existed ? ”

“I can partly account for that,” responded the young man. “She bore the name of another.”

The elder Darcy shook in his chair, as though a mortal dart had struck him.

“What say you?” he faintly articulated.

“Be comforted,” responded the youth, “she is a widow, if indeed one in her situation may be so styled.”

“God of Heaven! judge not my feelings too harshly. What could have tempted her to such a step?”

“The stern hand of misery,” replied the son. “She was pressed down, even to the earth, (as she has often told me) by poverty. She believed you were dead; and though she was prepared herself to die, she could not bear that I should perish from want.”

“Poor woman!” was all the father could utter.

After another pause, he inquired if she had any children by her second marriage, which, being answered, greatly to his relief, in the

negative, he next desired to know in what circumstances she was now placed.

“ In affluence,” replied young Darcy. “ Good often comes out of evil. Under pretence of succouring her from utter destitution, Mr. Waddy, a barrister, cajoled her into marriage, knowing, at the same time, that her inheritance could be recovered. This recovery, by means of his legal subtlety, soon ensued. Had it not been for his adroitness, her relations might have succeeded for ever in their wicked spoliation. Mr. Waddy is now dead, and my mother is in full enjoyment of her rights.”

“ Blessings and curses come to me hand-in-hand,” said the elder Darcy. “ That my wife still lives, is a knowledge bringing unutterable joy—that she is prosperous, is another balm ; but then, her second marriage, and our helpless captivity—what words of doom are these !”

“ We must escape,” exclaimed the midship-

man, anxious to change the course of his father's thoughts. The thing is not impracticable."

"For you, perhaps, it is not," returned the elder Darcy, in an agitated tone; "but alas! I am on my parole. I must not forfeit my honour."

CHAPTER III.

“The attempt, and not the deed,
Confound us. Hark !”

SHAKESPEARE.

THE joy of the father in having regained his son knew no bounds. How should it? What parent exists who, after having for many years given up all hope of ever again seeing his child, should suddenly find him alive and in health—what parent, under such circumstances, would not be greedy of the presence of his offspring? To Mr. Darcy every hour not passed with his son seemed so much

of existence lost. When away from him, life became not merely joyless and monotonous, but full of actual pain. The irritability—the impatient reckoning of time—the fretful and irrational estimate of the duration even of minutes intervening between the periods when he could visit the citadel—wrought upon the poor gentleman so intolerably as to render idle the dictates of prudence which might have convinced him that such constant applications for admission within the prison-gates, especially when made in order to obtain interviews with one particular individual, could not fail to draw upon him the eyes of the authorities.

But what could such considerations signify to a man afflicted with monomania on the very point to which they referred? Mr. Darcy could neither think by day, nor dream by night, of anything but his son, who had been so miraculously restored to him, and who, albeit he approached in the chains of the captive, came also invested with no inconsiderable portion of the warrior's glory. Had he not been proud

of his offspring he would have been unworthy the name of father.

But with the restoration of his son came intelligence of his son's mother. She, the adored of his youth, whom he had given up for lost, over whom his heart had mourned in bitter sorrow, was still living! Was there not sufficient ecstasy in this thought to divide his heart with the joy inspired by the presence of his son? Alas for human selfishness! The news of his wife's second marriage (though in consenting to such she became the victim of circumstances), coupled with the hopelessness of ever again seeing her, made her image fade away before the unalloyed and present enjoyment of his son's society.

Mr. Darcy was, therefore, always to be found within the walls of the citadel whenever the visits of those from without were permitted. He was, moreover, perpetually seen walking with one and the same person; that person was an English prisoner, and marked as a

“*mauvais sujet.*” This could not fail to be reported to the commandant, and the consequence was that, one evening, when the hour for the dismissal of visitors had arrived, and Mr. Darcy was about to pass through the outer gate leading to the town, he was unceremoniously pushed back, and told to consider himself a close prisoner within the walls of the citadel.

“You must mistake me, my friend,” said he to the maréchal de logis. “My name is Devon: I am a *detenu*, not a prisoner of war, and I am living within the town on my *parole*.”

“My orders are to detain you,” replied the officer.

“On what ground?”

“The commandant will be here to-morrow, and perhaps he may inform you.”

“Perhaps!” echoed Mr. Darcy. “May I not *demand* from him the reasons for this apparent harshness?”

“Certainly, monsieur, you may ; but then,” added the maréchal, “he may not choose to answer you.”

“Insolence !” exclaimed Mr. Darcy.

“Come, come, sir,” retorted the maréchal, “I have no time for altercation. You cannot pass, I tell you. Here, Antoine,” he continued, calling for one of the gend’arme, “conduct Monsieur Devon to the barracks No. 3, in the right wing.”

Remonstrance and resistance would alike have been unavailing. Conducted by a ruffianly-looking soldier, Darcy’s father recrossed the court-yard of the prison, and was finally lodged in a long barrack room, tenanted by about forty other captives, and situated at the very opposite part of the citadel to that which contained the house where the young midshipman of the *Nonsuch* was kept in durance.

Mr. Darcy’s present companions were all evidently of the lowest rank. If the new prisoner felt some little mortification at being thus associated with persons so far beneath him in

station, his suffering was rendered intolerable by the conviction that he was condemned to a part of the prison so distant from that containing his son.

In the morning he learnt from a fellow-prisoner the cause of his detention, which, indeed, was no other than has been indicated a page or two back. Having been suspected of plotting some mischief with the young midshipman, who, as has been already stated, was branded as a *mauvais sujet*, the elder Darcy lost not only the advantage of his parole, but the infinitely more precious privilege of communing with his son, from whom he was now to be kept strictly apart.

This, indeed, was dreadful news ! To have the blessing of his son's society miraculously restored to him, and then for it to be as suddenly snatched away, was beyond all measure tormenting, and almost stupified him with despair.

One morning, after he had been separated more than a week from his son, while moodily

pacing the room to which he was confined, one of the prisoners, an English seaman about five-and-forty years of age, accosted him in these words :—

“ I axes your pardon, sir, but you doesn’t seem to me to like your new berth. I can’t abide to see a man down-hearted. Can I do anything for you, sir? Natur’ never intended man to be down in the mouth. ‘It’s a long lane as has never no turnin.’ I does n’t give up the thoughts of getting another glimpse of my old woman at North Corner. Was you ever at Plymouth, sir?”

“ I have reason to know it well, my friend ; but I shall never see it more.”

“ Cheer up, sir,—never say die. If I can sarve ye in any way, you’ve only to say the word.”

“ Are you permitted to walk about within the citadel, or are you as strictly confined to this part as I am?”

“ Why no, sir,—in regard o’ liberty within the walls, I can’t altogether complain. You see,

sir," added the seaman, significantly, " I didn't bring with me a 'brandy-ticket.' "*"

" I want nothing of the sort, my good man," rejoined Mr. Darcy, with difficulty suppressing a smile. " But I should be glad if you could take a message from me to a young gentleman confined on the other side of the citadel."

" I 'm a bad hand at bearin' words. Moreover, I haven't been here long enough to know how to weather on these here Johnny Damerries. They're civil enough, to be sure, to me; but then, you know, sir, Crappo's civility's all 'pocrysy, no natur in it—can't be trusted. But what's the young gemman's name?"

" Darcy."

" What, *my* Mr. Darcy?"

" Late of the Nonsuch."

" Why, bless yer heart, I 'm a Little Liner

* Whenever a man-of-war's man of bad character is sent to the hospital, his demerits are mentioned in his "ticket." The forecastle phrase is—"He's sent with a 'brandy-ticket,' " meaning a branded-ticket.

myself. Lord help ye, sir, I'd lay my life down for Mr. Darcy—that I would. Known him any time?"

"From first to last some seventeen years."

"Must have known him a chick, then—afore he was fledged."

"Yes, I'm a near relation of his. I have an important communication to make to him. As he is a shipmate of yours, I'm sure you will zealously convey to him what I shall say to you."

"I fears, sir, I should only make a mess o' the matter. I'm sartin, sir, we can manage the thing in another way. Couldn't you see him yerself, sir?"

"Impossible."

"No it isn't, sir. If *you* only can come the parly voo, I'll show ye how to do the rest. The way is this:—When the last evening muster is over, you crack on for the barracks; turn in as fast as you can, and leave yer clothes at the foot of the bed. At the same time, I must sham groggy, and with my traps off seem to be

gropin' for my bed ; stagger for'ard towards your crib ; seize your clothes, leave mine in their stead, and reel back to my own berth. Early in the mornin', afore the prisoners begins to make a move, you must turn out : clap on my riggin', and then away with ye at once for Mr. Darcy's cell. I'll manage to hide yer long togs, an' borrow a suit o' riggin' for myself from a sick man as is bad in bed wi' the roomatiz."

"Thank you for your scheme, my good friend," returned Mr. Darcy. "Let me rely on its execution this very night, and pray oblige me by accepting this," handing him a Napoleon.

"No, sir, I never took the bounty yet ; 't isn't cash as can spur me to sarve Mr. Darcy."

"I meant not to offend. Will you venture on your scheme to-night?"

"Ay, as sure as Tom's Tom."

"Agreed."

"But 'vast heavin', sir. Now I thinks on

it, we wants somethin' more to tarn ye out ship-shape and Bristol fashion."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, ye know, sir, you 've never nothin' of a tie, and without a tie you 'd soon be dis-kivered. I 've never no time to-night to transmogrify a soger's tail for ye ——"

"A soldier's tail?" interrupted Mr. Darcy; "but *I* require a sailor's tail."

"I knows that very well, sir; but as you can only have a sham tie, in course we can only make ye a soger's tail. Howsomever, never fear: with a wisp o' straw, a fathom o' black riband, and a hank o' real hair to curl at the end, I 'll tarn out a tie for ye, as Natur needn't turn her back on."

It was consequently agreed on, that the scheme should be executed the following night; so that Mr. Darcy indulged the hope of again seeing his son on the next morning but one.

The whole discussion between Mr. Darcy and Weatherley did not occupy a quarter of an hour; and, to prevent suspicion, they now

separated, having clearly understood each other as to the movements of the next night.

The time appointed arrived. Weatherley executed his plan without exciting suspicion, and the dwellers of the room were soon asleep. Mr. Darcy could hardly close his eyes; and soon after daylight, he got up, dressed himself in Weatherley's clothes, tied on the false tail, and sallied forth towards the midshipman's quarters. It was about seven o'clock in the morning when he reached them.

A slight knock at the door soon brought out a gend'arme, who inquired the reason of the applicant's early visit.

"I wish to deliver a message to Mr. Darcy, an English midshipman."

"He is not here. You can't see him," replied the man, shutting the door in the face of the supposed seaman.

Here was a new difficulty. How could it be surmounted? It was plain that the youth had been removed into closer custody. But how was his father to ascertain in what part of the cita-

del he was now confined? To whom could he, in his present garb, apply for information? It would be unwise to expose himself to much scrutiny; for his face was well known in the citadel, and he was utterly destitute of nautical phraseology necessary for the support of his newly-assumed character. Something, it was quite clear, must be quickly decided on.

He was deliberating what measure to adopt, when, on casting his eyes upwards, and along a range of buildings not far from the midshipman's quarters, he perceived the face of a young man at an open window, which he instantly recognised to be that of his son. One point was thus gained. But how was he to obtain access to the youth? Mr. Darcy knew enough of the citadel to be aware, that in the portion of it to which his son was now consigned, the utmost strictness prevailed respecting the custody of the prisoners, who, being sent there under the arbitrary and absurd suspicions of the commandant, were kept apart from each other in little rooms or, more

properly speaking, cells, and were forbidden to receive any other visits than those of the jailor.

The consciousness of all this filled Mr. Darcy with dismay. He had no friend to consult—no time for deliberation even with himself. Were he to remain lurking about, suspicion would fall on him, and he would be subjected to a dangerous examination.

“ I must make another attempt, under more favourable circumstances,” thought he. “ At present, my best course will be to return to the barrack-room, wrap myself up in my cloak, and so remain, till night shall enable me to get rid of my disguise.”

In this manner he ruminated, while standing near the closed door which he imagined led to the cells in one of which his son was confined. He was about to retrace his steps to the barracks, when, breaking the silence of that early hour, his ear caught the footsteps of persons rapidly descending the stairs within. Mr. Darcy listened attentively: the flying steps

approached nearer and nearer ; they reached the outer door, a bolt was suddenly drawn, and a *blanchisseuse* rushed forth, followed by a gendarme.

Mr. Darcy now instinctively shrank behind an angle, formed by the bold projection of the architrave around the door, and was able, unobserved himself, to glance at the seeming fugitives.

In an instant the girl's laugh broke upon his ear.

“ Oh ! oh ! Ma belle, c'est inutile de courir si vite — nous en aurons,” exclaimed the gendarme.

“ On vous en souhaite.”*

“ Je t'arrête au nom de L'Empereur, farceuse.”

“ Vive l'Empereur ! on se fiche de son gendarme.”

The gendarme, half breathless, continued his pursuit, in which he was so engrossed as to ob-

* This expression of the French laundress can only find an English equivalent in the emphatic and popular phrase, “ I wish you may get it.”

serve nothing around, and to be for a moment forgetful of the duty imposed on him.

The thought of rushing up stairs to his son suddenly crossed Mr. Darcy's mind. The temptation was too great to permit him to weigh the folly of the attempt. The first impulse was obeyed; he darted up the steps, and to his great joy perceived his son standing at a door partly ajar.

“ Charles, do n't you know me ?”

“ Who are you ?”

“ Your father. Quick ! Let me in !”

All this had occupied scarcely a minute from the time when Mr. Darcy first heard the footsteps on the stairs.

“ Good Heaven !” exclaimed the midshipman, “ what is the meaning of this disguise ?”

“ I will tell you immediately,” replied his father ; “ but first acquaint me with the reason of your removal to this part of the citadel.”

“ I hardly know,” answered the youth, “ unless it be attributable to the suspicion excited in the mind of the commandant, by our fre-

quent and close conferences. But how got you up the stairs?"

"By taking advantage of the gend'arme's playful pursuit of a girl."

"Ah, my *blanchisseuse*. I was myself looking on this little trait of French gallantry."

"How long have you been here?"

"Above a week. But the disguise—the disguise. What means it?"

"I am now a prisoner in the citadel," replied the elder Darcy.

"Why, I understood you were on your parole."

"True; but the same cause that has sent you hither, my dear son, has taken from me the advantage of my parole; for which I thank Heaven, since I can now, without forfeiting my honour, join you in plotting our escape."

"Bravo!" exclaimed the light-hearted youth.
"We will not again separate."

"We must. I must forthwith return to my barrack-room. It will not do to be

missed at the hour of inspection. Besides, when your gendarme takes his usual rounds, what punishment might accrue to you from my being found here? We must trust to fate for other stolen meetings, when we may, happily, hit on some scheme for deliverance."

"I tell you," pursued the son, "we must keep together."

"What mean you? You speak in riddles."

"Listen, father. Since I have been in this second place of confinement, I have planned, night and day, the means of escape. If I could succeed, I thought I might manage, on arriving at home, to get you exchanged, and thus restored to my mother. After the most anxious consideration, I became convinced that any attempt at escape by the gates would be madness; and I began to think it might be possible to gain the roof of this building, I might let myself down into the fossé, and then scale the outer wall. No other means of access to the roof

presented themselves than were afforded by the chimney. Up this accordingly I resolved to mount.

“ On inspecting the chimney, however, I found it was full of gratings and bars of iron, which not only accounted for the smoke which for days had almost smothered me, but seemed to preclude the hope of passage. I was without a companion, had neither tools nor other materials, and was liable to intrusion night and day. But despair is a dull, stupid, useless thing. If I could contrive to get a few tools, and a few fathoms of rope, I might yet succeed.

“ But should Fate prosper me thus far, how were such things to be secreted from the Argus-eyes of the people about me? This was the most puzzling point of all. At last, I noticed, that, though any movement in the apartment above me was distinctly heard, I could not detect the least sound from the room below, which I knew well was tenanted. This circumstance led me to conjecture (for tribulation makes us

all wonderfully keen) that there might be a double floor with a space between each. You see this flap-table supported by iron legs. These I have managed to unscrew; by their means have raised some tiles of the floor, and by digging, have verified my conjecture, and discovered a vacant space between this floor and the ceiling of the room below, of about four feet."

The elder Darcy looked down to the floor, and could perceive no sign of the displacing of the tiles.

"I was obliged to do it in a neat and workmanlike manner," said the son, smiling. "See!" And he removed a few tiles, disclosing to his parent a safe and capacious hiding-place.

"When the time arrives," continued the young man, "for going the rounds, or when I hear any one ascending the stairs, then, dear father, you must retire into this sub-*tile*aneous gulf. You will soon be able to emerge again into light. My allowance of food must serve for

both, and we must keep watch and watch during the night till we are able to escape, of which I do not despair. Hist! what noise is that? Some one comes. Quick, quick, dear father. There — bend your body — quick, quick!”

Mr. Darcy disappeared; and the youth had hardly time to replace the tiles, when the door was opened, and the *maréchal de logis* entered the room.

CHAPTER IV.

“Terror froze up his hair, and on his face
Showers of cold sweat roll’d trembling down apace.”
COWLEY.

“Bon jour, Monsieur,” said the maréchal, greeting young Darcy, as he entered the narrow apartment, “bon jour; I am come to remove you from this part of the prison to the wing on the other side. Push that chair and table through the door way, Pierre,” addressing the gend’arme, “and then remove the bedding. We must lock up the room before I conduct l’aspiran to other quarters.”

This, under young Darcy's circumstances, was a terrible announcement. To leave the place where he imagined he could best execute his plan of escape, would in itself be a grievous calamity; but to have the room locked upon his father, while lurking in dismal concealment, was a thought of terror—nay, of madness. A flush of heat came suddenly over the youth, producing large drops of perspiration, which coursed each other rapidly over his face. This was followed by mortal paleness. He now felt cold as death itself, and trembled violently. Unless some sudden expedient should occur to him (and such was not likely, for he felt almost bereft of his senses), his father would be condemned to dreary solitude, starvation, and death; for his escape by the window appeared impossible. The youth's energies and spirits had never failed him till the present distressing juncture. He could now scarcely keep his feet, and looked wild with dismay.

“Why, what ails you, Monsieur?” said the maréchal. “You seem very ill.”

“I am so,” replied young Darcy. “I have

suffered much. Why am I to be removed? If it be not absolutely necessary, I am sure you will take pity on my sickness, and not expose me to the inconvenience to which I must be subjected by change of apartment in this damp month of November."

"Pardon, Monsieur," rejoined the maréchal, with some appearance of sympathy, "but I have no choice. This wing is undergoing repair. We are now removing all the prisoners, and locking up the rooms."

"If I am taken from this room this morning," said young Darcy, in a tone of despair, "I feel I shall die."

The poor youth's looks bore evidence to the truth of his words, and he sunk upon the bed in a state of seeming exhaustion.

"Pauvre garçon!" exclaimed M. la Croix. "Pierre, do you know how soon the workmen will come to this part of the building?"

"In about three days, if one may judge from the way they're now working."

Young Darcy caught at this reply. "Pray, sir," supplicated he, "let me remain for that

brief period. I shall then be better. But if, with my present pain in my chest, I should be removed from this warm aspect to an un-aired room on the north side, where the sun never enters, my life, I am convinced, would be forfeited."

"Well, well," responded the maréchal, "I will see the commandant on the subject of your request. He can have no wish to distress you unnecessarily. But he is compelled to act upon character. Monsieur Le Roux has described you as a '*mauvais sujet*,' and your conduct while in the midshipman's quarters has drawn upon you increased suspicion. Allons, Pierre. Bon jour, monsieur: you shall hear from me in an hour or two."

So saying, he took his leave.

The blood rushed again to the youth's heart. As soon as he thought his late visitors were no longer in danger of returning, he lifted the tiles, and his father emerged from his concealment.

"I heard it all!" exclaimed Mr. Darcy, embracing his son. "Noble boy! Your presence

of mind has saved me. But what had we best do, now ? Suppose they refuse to let you stay ? Had I not better consult your welfare and my own by returning to the barrack-room ?”

“ No, no,” replied the son. “ Retreat is not practicable. The gend’arme at the door would intercept you ; and the window is too high and too strongly barred for egress that way. Besides, it is broad daylight. You have, therefore, no choice but to remain at all risks.”

“ But I shall be missed this evening in the barrack-room, when the names are called.”

“ To be sure you will,” returned the midshipman ; “ but what of that ? They ’ll never suspect you can be *here* ; and we must take care that they do n’t stumble on that fact by accident. To-morrow they ’ll scour the country for you, and great will be their perplexity when no traces of your flight can be discovered. Besides, I have struck upon a plan which will not only mislead the commandant on the subject of your sudden disappearance, but also throw the maréchal and all his myrmidons on the wrong scent, touching the probability of

any attempt *by me* to escape. Good heavens! what would I not give to see Emily Melton before she proceeds to Paris."

"But your plan, dear Charles?" interrupted the father.

"It is merely a letter to Miss Melton. My importunate supplication to the gend'arme to have it safely conveyed, will be quite sufficient to ensure its interception."

"Excellent! Where, my dear boy, did you acquire such foresight?"

"At sea, sir, where every good thing, good manners among the rest," returned the son, with a smile, "are learned in rare perfection."

"Good spirits too," observed the elder Darcy, "if one may judge from yours, which are so wonderfully kept up in our present critical state."

"It would never do to be down-hearted," rejoined the youth. "Our attempt must be made at night. But three or four things are necessary to be done, before we can think of commencing our flight."

“What are they?”

“First of all, we must unfix the bars in the chimney; this can be done by means of the iron legs of the flap table, with which we can loosen the brick-work wherein the bars are set. Secondly, we must provide ourselves with a rope: this seems a difficulty, indeed. Thirdly, we must procure a map of the country: another almost insurmountable obstacle. And fourthly, we must raise some money.”

“Luckily,” said the elder Darcy, “I have saved fifty Napoleons. They were sent to me the other day with my clothes and linen. My books and maps were detained; I know, however, enough of the country to serve our purpose. But the rope, the most essential of all, by what means can that possibly be procured?”

“In no other way,” replied the son, “than by assistance from the outside. One of my men is confined somewhere in this place. He is honest, sincere, single-minded, and brave—a jewel, but rather in the rough. If I could only see *him*, I should hardly fear for our suc-

cess. By the by," added the young man, again looking hard at his father's disguise, "from whom did you get that dress?"

"From the very man, I suspect, to whom you have alluded. It can be no other; for he said he would lay down his life for Mr. Darcy. Is he not very fond of talking about nature?"

"The same. Poor Weatherley! I have little doubt that to-morrow, when you are missed, he will be hovering about my quarters, if he can find them out, and I know he will not easily relinquish the search. In this expectation, I shall prepare a note for him, so as to be ready the moment I see him. But, come," he continued, "let me proceed in the unfixing of the bars. I must work in silence, though, for in this place the very walls have ears."

Having extinguished the fire, and selected the piece of iron which had the least obtuse point, the midshipman commenced his work of picking out the mortar from between the bricks immediately surrounding the gratings, and which were situated only a few inches

above the stove. In this operation, young Darcy was compelled to stand with part of his body in the chimney, while his father held a light upwards to assist his labours.

The day was thus consumed ; and evening found the young man wearied out with his work, which, however, was successfully performed. But the youth had no little difficulty in washing himself clean of the soot in time for the night inspection.

CHAPTER V.

“What news? Every minute now
Should be the father of some stratagem.”

HENRY IV.

As had been anticipated, the disappearance of the supposed Mr. Devon created no little stir and confusion within the citadel. Several of the *garde nationale* set out early in the morning to scour the surrounding country, and, as he had been denounced as a “*chef de complot*,” a considerable reward was offered for the capture of the fugitive, dead or alive.

On the unsuccessful return of the human

blood-hounds* in the evening, the sensation produced by the escape became stronger even than it was at first. That the soldiers who had divided their troop into little parties, and traversed every possible direction, should have failed in detecting the least trace of Mr.

* That this designation is not undeserved will appear by the following fact, recorded in Capt. Boys's (R. N.) interesting Narrative of his Captivity and Adventures in France and Flanders.—“An act of cold-blooded atrocity afterwards occurred at Givet, in the person of Hayward a midshipman : this gallant fellow, with his friend Gale, had broken out of prison in the face of day, and fled into the country. Unfortunately they were discovered, and the alarm given : two horse gend'arme immediately pursued, and overtook them in an open field. On their approach, Hayward, being unarmed, and seeing escape impossible, stood still, extending his hands, and exclaimed, ‘Je me rends !’ But this was too favourable an opportunity to be neglected, for the savage gratification of shedding human blood. Neither the defenceless state of the individual, nor his prompt surrender, could avert these merciless miscreants from plunging their swords into his breast, and mangling the body in a horrible manner. It was afterwards taken into the prison yard, stripped naked, and exposed to the view of the prisoners, for the purpose of intimidating others from the like attempt. Gale gave himself up at the same time ; and though he received several wounds, they did not prove mortal.”

Devon's flight, added mystery to vexation. How could he so completely have eluded their pursuit? Some of the people in authority laid blame on the men, accusing them of want of vigilance: others thought the poor Englishman had fallen a victim to his own rash attempt, and been drowned in the fossé. In this latter supposition they were confirmed by the following intercepted letter to Miss Melton, which, as the reader already knows, young Darcy intended to write as a feint.

Lower Citadel,
November 27th, 180—

“My dear Miss Melton,

“I am delighted to hear your papa has at length obtained permission to proceed with his family to Paris. I trust on his arrival in ‘the great capital,’ he will not forget to lend his old shipmate a helping hand; and that he will try what can be done with the authorities to effect my exchange. My health is too delicate to endure close imprisonment.

“ I understand I have been officially reported to the commandant as a ‘*mauvais sujet* ;’ and that I am indebted to the monster Le Roux for this *distinction*. But however long I may be confined within these walls, I am determined to pursue a conduct which shall merit a designation the very reverse.

“ I am much distressed at the sudden disappearance of poor Mr. Devon. I fear he has forfeited his life to some rash and futile endeavour to escape. If, as I suspect, he made the attempt to cross the deep ditch which surrounds the citadel, there can be little doubt of his fate. Poor man ! what could have induced him to such an act ? I dread to think of it.

“ As for myself, I mean to adopt ‘*patience*’ as my motto ; and when I can procure a few French books, apply myself assiduously to the study of the language. I comprehend it tolerably well : but to appreciate its beauties, I must make myself master of its idiom.

“ Oh ! that I could accompany you to Paris.

Pray remember me most kindly to Mr. and Mrs. Melton, and entreat your papa to apply for my exchange. The gend'arme waits: so I must conclude.

“Yours sincerely,

“CHARLES DARCY.”

Thus strengthened in their conjecture, orders were given that the fossé should be diligently dragged—a measure that was soon put into execution. One whole day was expended in this useless labour, which ended only in poisoning the water, by stirring up the sub-aqueous deposit of black and filthy mud, which had scarcely been disturbed in the memory of man.

While this tedious process was going on, a few midshipmen, who tenanted the apartment over-looking the fossé, were seen gazing out of the windows, laughing at the disappointment and perplexity of the Frenchmen. Some of these light-hearted youths even went so far as to exclaim, every now and then, as the vexation of the *searchers* became more apparent and

ludicrous, “ Ah, c’est inutile ! Il est parti en poste pour l’Angleterre.”

These taunts tended not a little to exasperate the gensd’arme, who heaped every malediction on the head of the fugitive, and hoped he was smothered beyond the reach of mortal drag.

Nothing further could be done. The Frenchmen were utterly confounded. Their boasted penetration and sagacity were at fault, and they were glad to stifle any allusion to an affair in which they had evidently been outwitted. Nothing more therefore was said of the escape of Mr. Devon.

But though the subject was thus consigned to oblivion, Weatherley pondered ceaselessly on the disappearance of the English prisoner. He resolved to find out where young Mr. Darcy was confined, and to place himself beneath his window, in the hope of being seen.

This was precisely what had been anticipated by the two captives, who were constantly on the watch for such an event. Accordingly, on the day succeeding that which had been occupied

in dragging the fossé, being the third morning subsequently to the supposed flight of Mr. Devon, Weatherley was descried loitering about the court-yard immediately below young Darcy's room. The seaman soon recognized his youthful officer, who, having already prepared a letter, deposited it in a stocking which seemed to fall accidentally out of window, and fortunately was picked up by Weatherley without attracting observation.

No sooner was the old Naturalist able to seclude himself for a few minutes than he perused the letter, which briefly stated the writer's intention to escape, provided he (Weatherley) could manage to procure for him a rope of a certain length, and furnish a hauling-line, by which it could be drawn in at the window. A signal, too, was proposed, by which communication was to be ensured.

"As to the hauling-line," said the quartermaster to himself, "I can manage that easily enough. The ball o' twine I got to work the cabbage-net will do for that; but as for ten or twelve fathom of inch or inch-an'-a-half

rope, that's a reg'lar pauler.* Howsomever, will's the word. Natur never leaves a fellow long in the larch."

In deliberating within himself how this rope could possibly be procured, during which he was more than once at his wit's end, and in utter despair, a bright thought suddenly flashed across his mind, as is often the case at the eleventh hour, and when even Hope seems to have abandoned us. The well-rope in the mid-shipmen's yard—might not that be purloined? This rope would be the more valuable, inasmuch as it was ready rove through a tail-block, so as to facilitate either ascent or descent. No time was lost in inspecting it; but, alas! it was found to be so decayed, as to be deemed not trustworthy for the contemplated purpose.

"This 'ill never do," thought Weatherley; "it's too long-jawed; it's as rotten as a caulker's length of rum-bowlin'. I should n't wonder if they'd be glad of a new one, so we must condemn it as unfit for sarvus."

So saying, the old fellow took out his knife,

* Puzzle.

and hacked the strands at different distances so effectually as to render the rope unfit for further use. It accordingly broke on the first attempt to raise a bucket of water.

This demolition of their rope was attributed by the English midshipmen to the malignity of the French, who, as they thought, not content with holding them in durance, wished to plague them unnecessarily. But, however this may be, it was certain the "young gentlemen" could not subsist without water; a subscription was therefore set on foot among themselves to purchase another rope.

Old Weatherley had reckoned on this, being precisely the method he had devised for procuring strong and serviceable gear. No sooner was the new rope supplied, than the quartermaster, in the dusk of the evening, which succeeded a foggy drizzly day, found means to transport the tail-block and the rove rope beneath the window, where the young officer was confined. The signal was given, which being answered by the watchful mid, the ball of twine, intended for the hauling-

line, was thrown into the open window, and dexterously caught by young Darcy's hands, protruded between the iron bars.

In unwinding the ball (which it may be imagined was speedily done), a slip of paper was found, whereon was written,

“ I likes yer notion. There's natur in it: I'm ready to jine co. whenever ye says the word; for stay I does n't another hour after ye cuts yer stick. I can manage the haulin'-line, and, what's better, I can crib the new well-rope, tail-block, and all. If you can unship one of the iron bars of the window, so as to rouse me in, you can whip me up as easy as a quarter of beef.

“ Yours to command,

“ TOM W——”

Now it fortunately happened that, in considering every possible means of escape (though the chimney was the favoured one), young Darcy and his father had investigated every thing within and without their room. In their scrutiny, they had discovered a fissure

in the sill of the window, occasioned by the insertion of one of the bars in the stone-work. The portion thus ruptured might easily be loosened from the rest, so as to enable them to detach the bar, and give room for the admission of Weatherley.

The ready-rove well-rope having been hauled in, the fragment of the stone was now removed, the bar taken out of its socket, and, after securing the tail-block to the upper extremity of another bar, the running part of the rope, or, as Darcy termed it, "the whip," was overhauled down to Weatherley. All this scarcely occupied five minutes.

Seating himself in the bight of a bowline knot, the quarter-master was soon whipped in under cover of the darkness and the drizzle, and was inclosed in the same room with the young officer to whom he was so sincerely devoted.

"Hush ! hush !" exclaimed young Darcy, as he cast off the tail-block from the standing bar, and replaced that which had been detached.

“For heaven’s sake, make no noise ! We ’re now all right. To-morrow night we ’ll run the rig.”

“In course,” said Weatherley, “ye means to have a reg’lar rindevoo?”

“Rendezvous? Out of this room, old boy, you don’t start tack or sheet, till we take our final departure.”

“Lord love ye, Mr. Darcy, I shall miss my muster to-night. Sure to be diskivered in the mornin’.”

“No you wont, old fellow ; look here.” And the midshipman disclosed the chasm between the floors. “Here you must stow yourself away till the coast is clear.”

“With all my heart, sir. It’s not so bad as the Jane’s fore-peak ; only, to be sure, a fellow *had* company there.”

“You shall not want for company here. You’ve heard all about Mr. Devon?”

“Yes, poor gemman ! I’d never a notion he meant to cut his stick. I wou’d n’t a spurred him on, if I had n’t a thought he only wanted to see *you*.”

“You spurred him in the right way, old boy, for here he is.”

“You *does n't* say so?”

At this moment the elder Darcy was seen peering through the chasm, where he had been “clapping on the whip-fall;” and like a “tierer in the tier,” coiling it away out of sight below.

“Dash my wig, who have we *here?*” exclaimed Weatherley, approaching the person of the metamorphosed landsman. “Hollo! *my* riggin’. I’m blest if it is n’t *he*. Lord love the man! What a fright ye gave a fellow. Thought ye was five fathom deep in the thundrin’ mud. Crappo’s reglarly done. Did n’t I tell ye, my tie and togs ’ud do the thing. I know’d it.”

“This gentleman,” said the midshipman, cutting short Weatherley’s joyous strain, “is my father. I’ve no time for further explanation. The turnkey’s hour approaches. So between decks you must both dive till the coast is clear. Then, though short commons, we can pipe to supper.”

“I knows there’s a southerly wind in the bread-bag; but never mind that, I’ve summet here,” said Weatherley, drawing a flask from his pocket, “as ’ill keep us weather-tight till morn. Come, gemmen, s’pose we drinks luck an’ life to mud-larkin’.”

“No, no, Weatherley,” replied the midshipman, “we shall want that liquor to splice the main brace on more urgent occasions. Come, dive, old fellow. Time’s precious.”

The elder Darcy and the quartermaster now disappeared between the floors. In a short time, the turnkey paid his visit, and all was made safe for the night.

CHAPTER VI.

“ Danger, thou dwarf dress’d up in giant clothes,
That shew’st far off still greater than thou art,
Go, terrify the simple and the guilty.

* * * * *

We dare look on thee
In thy worst shapes, and meet thee in them too.”

SUCKLING.

DURING the occurrence of the foregoing incidents, a fresh source of consternation in the citadel was furnished by the absence of Weatherley at the evening inspection. As in the case of Mr. Devon, the roll to muster was beaten, guns were fired by way of alarm to the adjacent country, and several of the *garde nationale* were dispersed in different directions to capture the runaway. As young Darcy

had often been seen in close conversation with Mr. Devon, and as Weatherley was a shipmate of the former, it was deemed advisable to make a sudden and unusually early visit to the midshipman's place of confinement, to ascertain whether he was still in safe custody.

It was scarcely light when Weatherley, who was keeping watch by the bed-side of the youth, heard footsteps stealthily creeping up the stairs. He gave one rapid glance at the midshipman—satisfied himself that he was fast asleep—sprang to the opening in the floor under the table—descended, and drew a piece of rug over the cavity, at the moment that a gend'arme with a lantern in his hand entered the room.

Advancing to the bed-side, the man held his light over the pillow, and finding that his prisoner was fast asleep, and that every thing about was perfectly quiet, he left the room to report that all was safe, as regarded *l'aspiran*.

The advance of day was marked by a steady and drenching rain. Young Darcy, unconscious of the "domiciliary visit" to which he had just been subjected, arose, and proceeded to *dis-*

inter his companions, congratulating them on the state of the weather, which was likely not only to swell the water of the fossé, and thus afford sufficient depth of fluid to buoy them up in swimming across it, but would keep all idlers in the citadel within doors, and confine the very sentinels to their boxes.

The rain continued unabated throughout the day: night came on, and with it came a strong gale from the west, which, however, did not, as is often the case, blow away the rain, but only made it worse, by driving it in a semi-horizontal direction.

The turnkey had now paid his last visit. All around seemed hushed. Nought was heard but the howling of the wind and the pattering of the heavy rain.

“Now,” said young Darcy, addressing his father and Weatherley, as he drew them on tip-toe stealthily toward the fire-place, “the hour has arrived that is to make or mar us. Being the youngest and lightest of limb, I shall at once mount the chimney, taking this bar with me. When I reach the top (and we are

not very far from the roof) I shall place it securely across the funnel."

"*I* knows," interrupted Weatherley: "like a capsan bar across a hatchway."

"Exactly so. Then I shall send the hauling-line down for the tail-block and whip-purchase. When secured aloft, three shakes of the fall will indicate its readiness for use. You, Weatherley, will then seat my father in the bight of a bowlin' knot, and whip him up, as we did you through the window. As soon as my father is safely landed aloft, I shall overhaul the fall-down for you, and you can readily rouse yourself up hand over hand."

"So far so good," said Weatherley; "but then, young gemman, how are *you* to shin-up? Can ye come the chimney-sweeper's purchase? Can't do that, never do nothin'. It's all knee, back, and elbow work, ye know; and, moreover, if ye does n't hold well on with yer knees, you're sure to come down by the run. Now if ye could find summet rough an' ragged to kiver the cap o' one o' yer knees, you'd mount a ree-vo like a risin' lark. Let's see," added

the quarter-master, looking round the room, "is there never nothin' in this beggarly place as 'll do to convart into a knee-kiver?"

The scanty furniture of the room did not offer any choice of expedients; but at length Weatherley cast his eyes on a small saucepan, in which the midshipman was wont to heat his miserable allowance of soup-maigre.

"The lid of this," said he, "will do for one knee, providin' we hacks the edge to make it hold its own."

"Our next move," resumed young Darcy, "must be the descent from so perilous a height to the rim of the fossé, which lies in the rear of this building. As soon as we are safely landed, we must swim over the ditch, when the remainder of our escape from the citadel and town will be comparatively easy."

"But," interposed the elder Darcy, "should we succeed so far as to be able to swim across the moat, how are we to climb the almost perpendicular bank of brick-work by which it is inclosed?"

“That’s a regular pauler,” exclaimed Weatherley.

“The face of the wall is broken in one part,” said young Darcy, “and forms a sort of ladder for any one who might desire to ascend it. Towards this point we must swim.”

“Got the right bearin’s?” asked Weatherley.

“I know them,” replied the midshipman. “You will have nothing to do in the water but to follow me. I shall take with me a skipping-line, by way of a man-rope. This, as soon as I gain the parapet, I can heave down for the assistance of my father, or you, Weatherley. Now let us think a little on our next move. We must not be entirely unarmed; and yet I know not how weapons are to be procured.”

“It is impossible,” remarked the elder Darcy.

“Have you never no pepper?” asked Weatherley.

“Pepper!” exclaimed young Darcy. “What do you mean? You talk nonsense.”

“No, I does n’t, sir. A paper or two o’ ground pepper is worth more nor twenty pair o’ barkin’ pops. For, s’posin’ (and you ’d find it no easy matter to keep ’em dry) you comed to use ’em in self-defence, the report ’ud blow all. Whilst, on t’ other tack, the dust dowses a Johnny Darmerie’s top-lights, an’ leaves him as helpless as a hulk, afore the feller can find out there’s even mischief in the wind. Moreover, you should always have yer knives on the half-cock, ready for use.”

“We understand you, now,” said the midshipman. “Fortunately I have some of that pungent powder in the cupboard here. Quick! let each of us wrap a paper of it in his neckerchief, that we may keep it dry. And now, I believe, I am ready to receive my knee-armour, and mount.”

The iron lid having been prepared as well as circumstances would admit, was well lashed round the youth’s knee—the bar of iron was secured to his person, and young Darcy disappeared up the chimney. His father waited the result in trembling anxiety.

A more anxious period of time can hardly be conceived than that during which the elder Darcy and Weatherley waited for the signal from the midshipman overhead. In climbing the chimney, he suffered excessive torment. His elbows were chafed raw; and as he knew not the necessity of covering his face, his eyes suffered extremely from the soot, which, moreover, nearly choked him. The two companions below thought his ascent would never be effected, so impatient were they.

At length, however, the youth gained the summit, when he lost no time in letting down his hauling-line. To this, the rope and tail-block were quickly attached, which being drawn up, was fastened, according to the proposed plan, to the bar across the funnel.

“Now, sir,” said Weatherley to the elder Darcy, “clap your seat in the bight of that ere: fancy yourself in the chair, and I’ll whip you up like a lady.”

This was soon done, and the father and son were together on the roof of the building. The rope being again lowered, Weatherley took

his place in the bowline knot, and hauled himself up hand over hand.

He had no sooner, however, joined his fellow-fugitives, than, feeling about in his pockets, he exclaimed aloud, "Dash my wig! I've forgot the brandy-bottle."

"Qui va là?" growled a rough voice from below.

"Do you hear that?" whispered the elder Darcy.

"Good heaven, Weatherley! what could have possessed you to sing out in that manner?"

"The loss of the brandy, to be sure, sir. What are we to do without it, after we crosses the ditch? It's no use talking. Here's down the chimney again for it."

He accordingly lowered himself as quick as lightning; but his feet had no sooner touched the bars of the grate, than his ancles were grasped by a strong hand, and he was dragged forcibly into the room. Lifting his eyes, he saw that his assailant was one of the gensd'arme stationed about the prison.

Weatherley being now lodged in the room,

the gend'arme darted towards the door, no doubt with the intention of alarming the guard; but the quartermaster was too quick for him. Seizing him by the throat, he forced him into the middle of the room, and a desperate struggle instantly ensued. With Weatherley's gripe upon his throat, the soldier was unable to utter a word, but being a taller and stouter man than the sailor, the latter was quickly pressed to the floor, though, as he relaxed not his gripe, the Frenchman was dragged down with him.

"Now or never," thought Weatherley, as with his left hand he sought for his knife in the pocket of his jacket. This was soon found; one blow, and the gend'arme rolled over, apparently deprived of life.

Not a moment was to be lost by Weatherley. Though panting, nay almost breathless, with his struggle, he gently opened the door, transferred the key to the inside, made the lock fast upon the dead or dying soldier, took his brandy bottle from the table, and hauled himself once more up the chimney.

Emerging upon the roof, he found his com-

panions in considerable alarm at the length of his stay. "Something has happened below: I am sure of it. We heard a slight noise in the room," exclaimed the midshipman, in an under tone. "What were you at?"

"Why, I had to battle the watch with a thundrin' soger as hauled me by the heels into the room."

"Then all is over! We are lost!" ejaculated the elder Darcy.

"Has any alarm been given?" asked young Darcy.

"No."

"How did you get away from the man?"

"Why, we had a tussle: if he'd got the better o' me, 't was up with all. So I keeps a grip on his throat to prevent his singin' out, and settles the business with my knife."

"What! killed him?"

"I hope not. But he could n't speak nor move a limb; so I locked the room inside, and it 'ill take 'em a little time to break open the door; though, if the fellow came spyin' of his own accord, they may n't miss him till mornin'."

“What an unfortunate occurrence!” exclaimed young Darcy. “Not a moment is to be lost. Retreat to our room is no longer practicable, even if we desired it. Every hazard must now be dared. Quick! Hitch the tail of the block round the chimney top. Down we must go directly.”

No time was lost in securing the block. The midshipman was soon swinging in mid air, lowering himself gradually to the brink of the fossé.

As the father saw his son dropping from the roof, and disappearing in the darkness on that fearful descent, a shudder came over him—he feared that he was lost to him for ever!

“Come, come, don’t be down-hearted,” whispered Weatherley. “The young gemman knows well what he’s about. He’s had a worse drop nor that afore now. I’ll lower ye handsomely enough. So keep your spirits up: we shall be in the water presently. ’T will wash this soot off.”

A shake of the rope from below indicated

that the youth was safely landed, and that Weatherley might round the rope up, by which to lower the elder Darcy.

This also was safely accomplished: the quarter-master soon followed his companions, when, taking care to unreeve the rope from the block overhead, he lowered it quietly into the dyke, so as it should sink out of sight.

“Now for the water,” said young Darcy. “We can all swim. Let us first take off our coats, and tie them on our backs like knapsacks. There, quick! quick! that’s right.” So saying, the youth stealthily lowered himself into the moat.

“He’s off, by the Lord!” exclaimed the quarter-master. “It’s our turn now, sir,” he added to the elder Darcy; and they both slid gently down into the ditch.

The midshipman led the way to the broken wall, where he had scarcely, however, succeeded in planting his foot in one of the interstices, than his father exclaimed, “Oh, Charles, the cramp, the cramp! I drown!”

“For God’s sake, Mr. Darcy,” ejaculated Wea-

therley, addressing the midshipman, "don't come down. Get to the top of the bank as fast as you can; I can hold yer father up for a minute or two, till you are able to heave the line into his hands."

Gaining the summit of the bank, and acting on Weatherley's suggestion, the youth had soon the satisfaction of rescuing his parent from his imminent danger.

Weatherley was now climbing the wall of the moat, when a soldier on duty was heard to make his usual cry, "*Sentinelle, prenez garde à vous!*"

At this, the quartermaster, pausing in his ascent, and directing his voice to his friends above, said in a low tone, "Fall down on your faces till the soger goes back to his box. He won't be out again, in such rain as this, till he's obligated to sing out the next quarter."

In a few minutes after this, the three companions were so far safe as to have gained the parapet above the moat. The night was dark, dismal, and rainy, with occasional gusts of wind from the S. W., the loud howling of which was

most auspicious to the attempt of the prison-breakers.

“Has the cramp left you now, father?” inquired the youth.

“I ’m still in pain,” replied Mr. Darcy ; “but being no longer in the water, the immediate peril is past ; though with these wet clothes clinging to me, I feel chilled to death.”

“Take a drop of this here,” said Weatherley, handing the flask of brandy. “Come, gentlemen, drink, and then heave ahead.”

The brandy, as might be supposed, was of infinite comfort to the half-drowned fugitives ; who, at length, after undergoing several minor dangers, and with great difficulty climbing the outer wall, emerged into the open country.

CHAPTER VII.

“ Success, the mark no mortal wit
Or surest hand can always hit :
For whatsoe’er we perpetrate,
We do but row, we’re steer’d by Fate.”

HUDIBRAS.

THEY now walked on during the remainder of the night, without halting for more than a few minutes at a time. In this way they had accomplished by dawn a distance from Valenciennes little short of twenty miles. The rain continued to come down in torrents. Not a creature was encountered on the road, and the wayfarers, though faint and weary, were beginning to congratulate themselves on their success

so far, when the elder Darcy suddenly exclaimed,

“Did n’t you see that?”

“What?” asked his son.

“The flash of an alarm-gun, repeating the signal from Valenciennes! We shall be apprehended by daylight.”

“Bless your heart, sir,” said Weatherley, “there’s never nothin’ to fear in that flash. It’s never more nor one of natur’s guns. The lightnin’ has been playin’ about for the last half hour. I’m sorry you did n’t keep to my riggin’. You would n’t then have been so narvous. Why, I’d bet a week’s grog, if we had it, that we sha’ n’t be missed till the mornin’ muster.”

The sun rose upon another rainy day, and the fugitives, now half-starved, thoroughly drenched, and galled in the feet, were still compelled to toil on. To yield to the pressure of fatigue and halt, would have been madness. They were walking for life.

After labouring onwards about ten miles further, the physical and moral energy of the

companions was fairly overcome. Nothing could so far have sustained them amidst their many perils and exertions, but the longing to see once again their relatives and native land. But the impetus given by this desire could not last for ever: it had now spent itself. They were utterly exhausted.

“Let us pause awhile,” said the elder Darcy. “I am dying of fatigue and want of food, and my feet will no longer support me. I hoped that before this we should have reached the village of Beaumont. I wonder if we are travelling northwards.”

“I am sure we are, sir,” observed Weatherley; “for I just now got a glimpse of the north star. What smoke is that risin’ into the sky, about a mile ahead? I’m sure it comes from more nor one house.”

“Then,” returned Mr. Darcy, “we are near Beaumont, after all. This inspires me with a little new life. Let us try to stagger on thither. Relief is at hand.”

“How?”

“I have a friend there, a humble tradesman,

who lived a few years ago in Valenciennes. He was dragged to the bar of justice on a false charge, as a felon. The evidence against him was subtly contrived, and he would have been found guilty and executed, had I not, during the time I lodged in his house, become possessed of knowledge sufficient to ensure his acquittal. Subsequently, he left the town in disgust, and removed to Beaumont, which I now believe is near at hand."

"A friend in view, old fellow," said young Darcy, cheering Weatherley.

"Remain here," continued the father, "while I struggle onwards in search of St. Juste. He is the very man to serve us, for he is a dealer in ready-made clothes. If I succeed in my search, I shall get from him some new suits, which, Heaven knows, we want, and which will effectually disguise us. In two hours I will be back."

And Mr. Darcy left his son and Weatherley crouching at the foot of a haystack.

In less than the time mentioned, young Darcy perceived a figure approaching in a blouse frock, bearing a basket in his hand. He could

hardly recognise his father in his peasant's disguise, but all doubt was speedily at an end. The elder Darcy had found St. Juste, by whom he had been furnished with a dress for himself and his two companions. The grateful Frenchman had, moreover, supplied him with food and wine, and placed in the basket provisions for the other fugitives.

Having refreshed themselves, Weatherley and young Darcy changed their clothes, packed the old garments in the basket, and the party soon resumed their route, passing through Beaumont, for the purpose of depositing in St. Juste's hands the basket containing the attire in which they originally escaped. This was to be destroyed.

So far, their enterprise had prospered. Nothing, indeed, disastrous occurred for several days. As the senior Darcy could speak French like a native, and as the other two were mute upon every occasion, the companions escaped suspicion, and were taken to be in reality that which they assumed to be.

One morning, however, as they were skirting the confines of a wood, three gend'arme burst

out from the cover of the trees, and, seizing the fugitives, demanded where they were going. The answers of the elder Darcy appearing to be equivocal, the soldiers were about to detain them as suspicious subjects. Indeed one of the gensd'arme had seized Weatherley by the tail, when the quartermaster suiting the action to the word, exclaimed, "Pepper the beggars!" In a moment, a well-aimed broadside of the tormenting powder was discharged into the faces of the gensd'arme. Blinded by the pepper, their hands were instinctively lifted to their eyes, and they seemed, by the spasmodic motion of their limbs, to be suffering intense torture. They were dancing about like madmen.

Profiting by their *coup-de-poudre*, the companions took to their heels, and continued running till pursuit must have been fruitless.

"Now, Weatherley," said young Darcy, "you must be convinced of the folly of continuing to wear your tail. Not only does it serve as a handle for an enemy's grasp, but also may be the means of identifying yourself and friends."

After no little persuasion, the quarter-master permitted the midshipman to 'dock his tie,' observing, as the knife severed the hair from his head, "'twas like partin' with a fellow's limb."

Nothing particular occurred after this, during the weary march of the fugitives, day after day, northward. Though they suffered much from the prevailing rain, and sometimes sleet, the weather, by diminishing the number of travellers, was so far favourable to their purpose.

At length while pursuing their route to Blankenberg, a village on the coast, not far from Ostend, they approached a solitary cabaret, which they entered for the purpose of procuring rest and refreshment. On seeing them, the landlady, with an earnest gaze, exclaimed,

"Mon Dieu, ce sont des Anglais !"

Mr. Darcy in vain assured her that he and his companions were French peasants. Madame Breughel (such was the landlady's name) would not give up the idea that they were English prisoners of war endeavouring to escape. She

had formerly been a servant in an English family, with whom she had lived so happily, that she had imbibed a sort of Anglo-mania. She also imagined, poor woman, that she *spoke* English like a native.

“De misfortun,” said she, “vos always vel-come to mien ouse. I do vel know you are de Engeleeche fly from de prison. I vil assist you in de vay. In four or five oder days, you shaul see dear Engleland. Dat you shaul.”

A comfortable breakfast was soon spread before a good fire; and the poor travellers partook eagerly of the repast. This being over, Madame Breughel, fearing the arrival of gens-d’arme, hurried the companions into a hayloft, in the rear of the building, where, confiding in the good woman’s sincerity, they stretched themselves, after hauling up the ladder, and fell into a long and sound sleep,—the first they had enjoyed under shelter for many long days and longer nights.

Madame Breughel’s cabaret was a house of police correspondence, and visited often in the week by military patroles. Though at first

this might have appeared to increase the danger of the English party, it in reality contributed to their security, as such would be the last place to come under suspicion.

Meantime Madame Breughel had not been idle. To facilitate their final escape, she had already secured the services of an individual well acquainted with the localities of the coast : he was, indeed, no other than her own brother,—a fisherman belonging to Blankenberg.

To strengthen Madame Breughel's agency, the Darcys offered to secure her brother the payment of one hundred pounds should he succeed in conveying them across the Channel. This was agreed to ; and, in order that there should be no mistake in finding the fisherman as well as his schuyt, it was proposed that the younger Darcy, dressed as a servant girl, should follow Madame Breughel to the beach at Blankenberg, where her brother would be found with his boat. This was accomplished ; and it was agreed between mynheer and the metamorphosed mid,

that, as the boat was hauled up at high-water mark on the beach, the attempt should not be made until the highest spring tide, which would ensue on the third night from that time.

The interval, though passed in bodily repose, (of itself an infinite blessing to men who had suffered such toils and privations,) was nevertheless marked by almost intolerable mental uneasiness.

At length the moment for the final departure arrived. It was two hours after midnight. The cabaret had long been closed. The Darcys and Weatherley felt some concern in leaving their kind hostess without one parting word. But all was dark around, and the inmates of the house were, no doubt, fast asleep.

In descending the ladder communicating with the loft, the figure of a woman was dimly discerned under the shed, at the base of the steps. This proved to be Madame Breughel, who, good soul! in the excess of her solicitude for the fate of the English prisoners, had not gone to bed, but waited up to arouse them in

time for their appointment. Approaching and embracing each in turn, affectionate adieus were interchanged; and the kind-hearted hostess, with her eyes suffused with tears, left the fugitives, fervently ejaculating, "God bless you—speed your flight!"

The party reached the beach in about an hour. Vandergucht was discovered crouching under the bow of his boat. The midshipman tapped him on the shoulder.

"Vat!" cried the schipper, "you kom before de tide. It's no better als halb float."

"Well, it's better to be too early than too late. Where's your son?"

"He kom on de top o' de tide."

"The wind's right out?"

"De vind vos verd vel, if de schuyt vos vonce in the vater. Bot de floatin her vill tak moch force. Mien vindlass too mak der tyfel's own dunder—vill tell de tale."

"We can easily trice the paul up out o' the click, and tie its tongue," said Weatherley.

Shrouded by the thick darkness, they waited in dead silence the rising of the tide, which

seemed to them as though it would never reach the vessel's fore-foot.

The wind, which was off the land, continued to freshen. Showers of sleet accompanied each succeeding squall; and the moon, though full and high in the heavens, was obscured by lowering clouds.

The party had been already forty minutes shivering under the boat's bow, when voices were heard in the rear, increasing in loudness, as if persons were rapidly approaching.

"Mien Got! de pateroul ist kommen," exclaimed Vandergucht. "Ve shaul aul be discover. Nossing bot dis can sev de laifs," he added, drawing the fugitives to a small skiff, which, with its thawts out, was lying on its side close at hand.

Crouching close together on the ground, Vandergucht turned the boat bottom upwards over the prostrate party.

"I hope he is n't *doin'* us," said Weatherley, doubtingly. "Terrible thing to be caught like rats in a trap."

"For heaven's sake talk not such nonsense."

"I does n't, young gemman, talk nothin' o' nonsense; for, after all, a Flemin'er's never more nor a Welsh Frenchman."

"Hush! They're close at hand," said the elder Darcy, as the tramp of feet broke upon his ear.

For a full hour the pent-up party awaited in painful suspense the fisherman's return. But neither Vandergucht nor his son made their appearance.

"It's never no use waitin' longer," said Weatherley. "The fellow's fightin' shy. Moreover, I'm sartin it's high water. Does n't ye hear the wash breakin' agen the schuyt's bow? If we waits many minets, we'll lose the tide; and then it's all up with us. Come, gemmen, we must make a move. So here's break bulk."

So saying, and bringing his back to bear against the bottom of the boat, the hidden trio were again unhoused, and in a few minutes were on board the schuyt working the windlass. Embedded, as the vessel was, in the shelving shingle of the beach, the process of

heaving her afloat was attended with considerable labour. But before the turn of the tide, the schuyt was brought to her anchor in the stream.

“She’s all our own,” ejaculated young Darcy, in joyous accents. “Meantime, to ensure success, we must do the thing man-o’-war fashion. You, father, will take this axe and cut the cable when told. I shall run the foresail up (for if we attempt to shew more canvas, we shall draw upon us the eyes of the battery), and you, Weatherley, will run aft, and take your old station at the helm.”

Weatherley was soon in his station. But what was his astonishment in finding the “un-shipped rudder” lying on the deck.

“What a two-faced fellow!” exclaimed the quarter-master, throwing his hat petulantly on the deck. “Thought as much. Can’t trust one o’ the breed. The cross o’ Crappo’s in ’em all. The jaw-breakin’ beggar, with his double Dutch kiled agen the sun!”

Vain were their endeavours to ship the rudder. It became impossible to hinge the

lower pintle into the gudgeon of the stern-post; and to proceed to sea, without a rudder, would have been an act of madness.

“ Give me a rope,” cried the daring youth, “ it’s a cold dive in a squall of sleet; but we must not now stand upon trifles.”

Lowering himself over the stern, he commenced work in the water. Twenty minutes was he overboard before he could succeed in hanging the rudder. At length he was hauled up, the cable cut, the fore-sail run up, and the schuyt was soon flying before a timely squall. Scarcely had she got abreast of the battery, when a shot whizzed close over the head of the elder Darcy.

“ Good God, Weatherley! how close to us that shot passed. Did you hear its whiz?”

“ In course I did, sir, and glad I was. Whenever you hears the hiss of a shot, it’s a sartin sign it does n’t *hit* ye. I’ll give ’em leave now to bang away till all’s blue. Go it, my sons; ye got the wrong target. Blaze away! Now the beggars ’ill keep it up till daylight.”

A fair wind soon brought them to the

Goodwin Sands. Early on the forenoon of the following morning, they approached a lugger-rigged boat working to windward.

“That’s a fair trader,” said Weatherley.

“If so,” said the younger Darcy, “he’s bound for Ostend. We had better speak him.”

Waving to the lugger, she shortened sail, hove too, and a parley commenced.

“Pray get your punt out, and come on board.”

“I should know that voice,” returned the stranger.

“And I should know that face,” rejoined the midshipman, over-joyed to find himself on the coast of his native land. “How goes on the haunted house? Eh! *Jolly Jem*? Why, father, here’s an old acquaintance of yours.”

The joy of the meeting was felt equally by Robinson, who, on coming on board, was commissioned by the Darcys to communicate with Vandergucht, and learn what had prevented his return to the beach. *Jolly Jem* was further instructed to say, that the promised hundred pounds, together with the value of the schuyt

and fishing gear, would be remitted as soon as the party should arrive in London.

The fugitives now shaped their course for Ramsgate, which they reached in a few hours.*

* For an incident in the foregoing chapter, the author is indebted to the interesting narrative of Captain Boys, R. N.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ Every of this happy number,
That have endured shrewd days and nights with us,
Shall share the good of our returned fortune,
According to the measure of their states.”

AS YOU LIKE IT.

LEAVING Weatherley at Ramsgate, Mr. Darcy and his son, after little more than an hour's rest, posted off to London. The approaching event, namely, a meeting between husband and wife, after so long a separation, and under such unwonted circumstances as those appertaining to the parties in question, was one of an all-absorbing interest to Darcy, not unmixed with pain. The poor lady, herself,

was utterly unconscious of what awaited her : she was ignorant even that her son had been taken prisoner ; but that her first husband should be still alive and coming to her, was a truth beyond the shapings of her imagination, in its most dreamy mood. Had such news been abruptly communicated, the joy would have been too vast for her bosom, and she might have died under so strong an ecstasy.

On arriving in London, young Darcy flew to his mother's house, and was received by her with the fond delight which none except a parent can know. But when she saw his pale and toil-worn visage, her heart throbbed with alarm, and she eagerly questioned him as to the sufferings which could have induced so great a change. The young officer now related the story of his captivity and escape ; and, with infinite caution and address, prepared his mother to receive the amazing intelligence of his discovery in the prison at Valenciennes. At length she was permitted to know all.

Vain would be any attempt to paint her first

impulse of incredulity, which only gave way to the irresistible evidence in possession of her son, nor the throbbings of her breast at the news, nor the distressing conflict which ensued in her womanly heart, as in one moment she burned with impatience to clasp the restored one to her arms, and, as in the next, considering what had passed during his absence (innocent as she was), she thought she could never look him again in the face. All we can state is, that, under the careful management of the son, his parents were again brought together—that all memory of the so-called widow's second marriage was buried in oblivion—and that Darcy and his wife were once more united in wedlock, Mr. Lawrence officiating as minister. The jocund clergyman was almost beside himself with joy on the occasion.

The contriver of all the sufferings of Mr. and Mrs. Darcy, the wretched Mordaunt, had not for many years been heard of. If he were still living, it was not likely he would ever dare to show himself again in society. Charity

might hope he was dead, a fate which would be preferable to life, with a conscience so laden as his.

Elizabeth Lazarus, at the earnest entreaty of Mrs. Darcy, continued to live with that lady. An affection, now the growth of years, had arisen between them, and parting would, indeed, have been sorrow. The Jewess was not, however, persuaded to look upon Mrs. Darcy's house as her permanent home, till the offer had been strengthened by the repeated solicitations to that effect of Mr. Darcy and his son. Preparatory, however, to this final arrangement in her behalf, she made one visit to her native place, Exeter ; but every member of her family had disappeared from that town, and she experienced the bitter surprise, which long estrangement from home scarcely ever fails to produce. She had never seen the place since Bobson, her betrayer, carried her off from her friends, on the night when Mr. Darcy and Miss Vernon eloped, at which time Elizabeth was on a visit at Teignmouth. Here the London ruffian had become acquainted

with the Jewess, and, being stricken by her beauty, determined on her ruin.

In furtherance of his master's designs, Bobson had "pumped" the ostler at the inn, where Darcy had ordered the post-chaise for himself and Miss Vernon. With the intelligence, thus obtained, he hastened to Ravenswood, but the junior Mordaunt was not at home. As, however, it was necessary to frustrate the escape of the lovers, no time was to be lost; and Bobson, himself, undertook, by a stratagem, to remove the chaise from its appointed rendezvous. To carry it on to Exeter, obviously required the agency of a female. Elizabeth was reluctantly persuaded to aid the deceit, believing that she should be left with her friends at Exeter; but, during their progress in the chaise, Bobson found means to induce her, under promise of marriage, to travel on with him to London, and thus did the poor girl become an outcast from her family, and from the people of her faith.

The worthy chaplain of the Nonsuch was

now fortunately enabled, like other "gentlemen of England, to dwell at home at ease." A living, in the gift of his old friend, Mr. Darcy, became vacant, and was instantly bestowed on the preserver of the rightful heir of Ravenswood, who having obtained the permission of his parents, was following up the first impression he had made on the heroine of the Jane, the family of the Meltons having already reached England in a cartel.

Sir Montague Mute resumed his seat in the senate. The purse and powerful influence of Lady Puffington again returned him—a ministerial tool. Nor was this all her ladyship effected for her loving lord. Conceiving that the command of a single ship was too circumscribed for the exercise and energies of an enlarged and enlightened mind, the dowager succeeded in obtaining for the baronet a seat at a certain Blue Board, in the vicinity of Whitehall.

The appointment of Mute as a Lord of the Admiralty excited in the Service a general

feeling of surprise. But by way of a palliative, it was whispered by authorities, that it was better to instal him in *office* ashore, than to leave him in *command* afloat.

For upwards of four years Sir Montague retained his place, until, on a change of administration, he was unseated in his *saddle* by a Cornet of Dragoons.

During the baronet's official career, "his door," to employ a vulgar phrase, "was never darkened" by even the shadow of a brother blue. His supercilious demeanour and ludicrous "mode of speech" often inspired a feeling very opposite to that which he sought to excite. On professional points he constantly betrayed the grossest ignorance. By way of parading his power, and exhibiting his brief authority, he never lost an opportunity to *question* the claims and services of his superiors in intellect as well as in rank. And, in his legislative capacity, he ever voted *against* every "motion" or measure intended to benefit the Service, ameliorate

the condition of the Seaman, or elevate the character of the Naval Officer.

Disappointed in promotion, Leatherlungs, shortly after the ship's return to Spithead, resigned his *premiership* of the "Little Liner." Not that he was wearied with the toils and cares of office; for he delighted in labour, fattened upon fag, and was wont to revel in all the *endearing* duties of stoning decks, stowing hammocks, squaring yards, clearing lighters, reefing topsails, and even "wearing ship with the watch and idlers"—no idle work of a wet and wintry night. But like nine-tenths of the *Sheet-anchor* class of the Service, the first lieutenant of the *Nonsuch* became disgusted and sickened to the very soul at the discouraging treatment—the callous, cold-hearted, and damning indifference—with which professional merit, unsupported by aristocratic *claims* and *political* pretensions, experienced in certain quarters.

At the suggestion, therefore, of his friend Law-

rence, he took his leave of the "Little Liner," and forthwith proceeded on a "Hymeneal cruize." At the Isle of Wight he "fell in with" the widow of a rich London stock broker, who, long accustomed to the roar of "bears and bulls," had determined to rusticate at Cowes. Here the lady was captivated with the vocal powers exhibited by Leatherlungs in "Cease, rude Boreas." The lieutenant soon "owned the soft impeachment," but was at a loss how to pop the question. In this delicate difficulty, he consulted his friend Lawrence, by letter, who, in his usual waggish way, despatched by return of post, the following

" Recipe.

"Take a walnut; carefully divide the shell; extract the kernel, and every particle of husk. Then dissolve a portion of isinglass, sufficient for the purpose of again adhering the parts of the shell. When your isinglass is ready, procure a hard crow-quill, out of which manufacture a finely pointed pen. Then cut from the best Bath paper a narrow slip, which when

rolled up can be encased within the cavities of the shell. When ready, indite, with a steady and resolute hand, the lines underneath, taking care, when the slip is encased and the shell closed, to label without,

“ A NUT TO CRACK.

“ Leave the woes of widow'd life ;
Be again a wedded wife ;
For he who gives thee this advice
Is longing for the shortest splice.”

It is needless to say more than that the chaplain's recipe soon produced the desired effect. In forty-eight hours from the presentation of the labelled nut, Leatherlungs became master and owner of the wealthy Mrs. Mash.

Should any of our readers be solicitous to learn the fate of Weatherley and “ Pleasant Paul,” it may be mentioned that the former, when serving as gunner of the largest of Her Majesty's hulks, in the harbour of Hamoaze,

“ Paid the debt o' natur ”

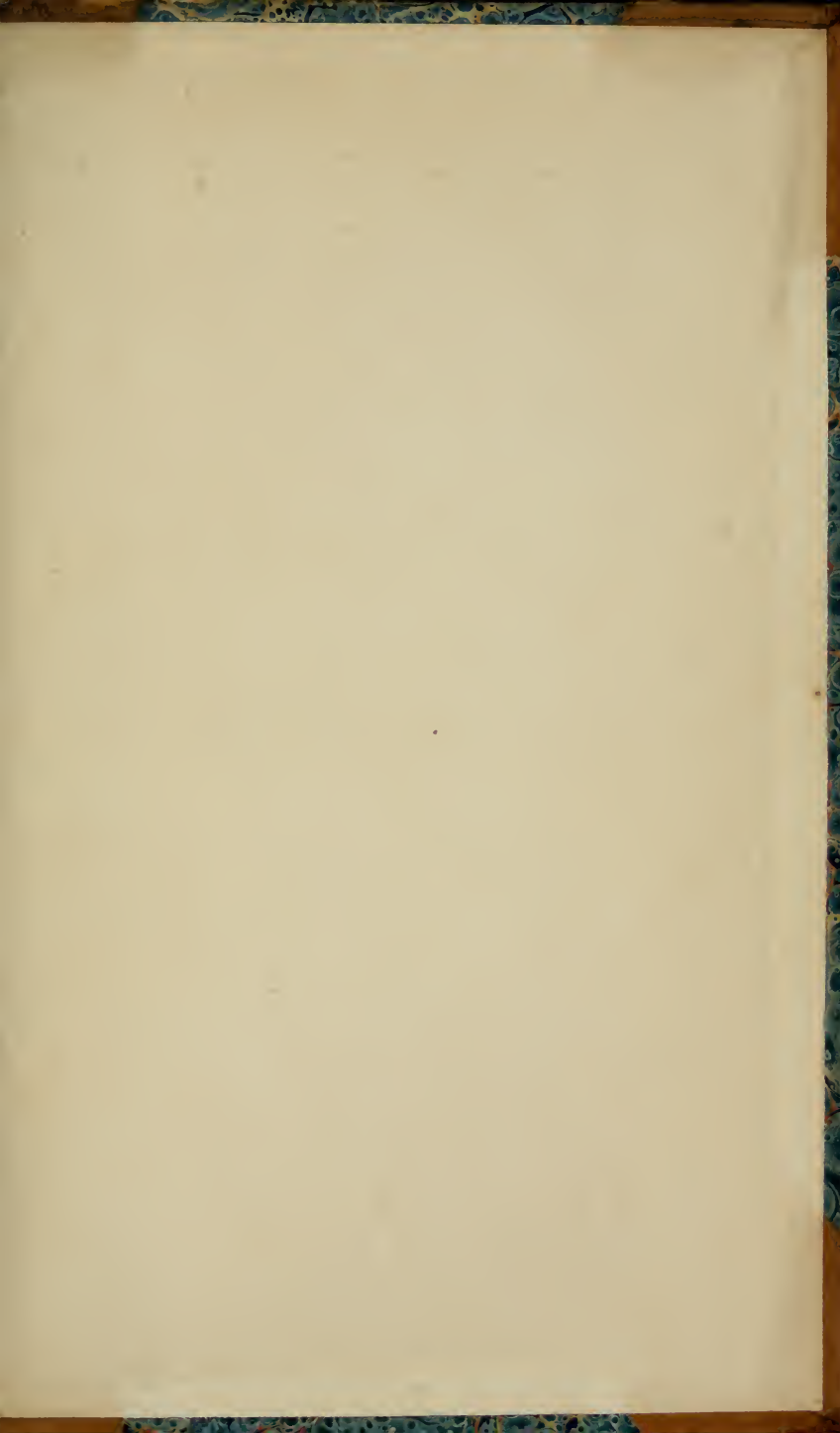
on the first of February, 1838 ; and that Potter may be found, limping with an occasional

touch of the “bago,” within the walls of Greenwich Hospital. Of all the blue-stockings tribe pertaining to that truly talkative establishment, the boatswain of the Britannia Ward is universally allowed to possess the best tongue at a tale. The yarn of “THE WITHERED HAND AND BROKEN BIT” is constantly called for; and Paul’s eulogiums of “Larking Larry” might be envied by the gravest prelate in the land. He often declares, were he “First Lord of the *Admirallity*, his first move would be to make Mr. Lawrence,

A reg’lar-built Bishop.”

THE END.

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